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The Roosevelt-Smith Affair

By Frank R. Kent

If Al Smith now calls Governor Roosevelt "that feller," will he, grown fat and rich and soft, become a Democratic Borah and clasp Franklin to his bosom at the Democratic convention? The inside story, the real reasons why politicians act as the public sees them act, the true conditions behind the platform thunder, these are the humanly interesting phases of politics. It is in the analysis of these human and practical sides of politics that Frank Kent excels. He will write for SCRIBNER'S *each month until the political conventions.*

It is risky business to write of politics at this stage of the game, when so much time must elapse between the day of writing and the day of printing. There may be a complete change of political scenery. With due allowance for this chance, I am going, nevertheless, to present now what I conceive to be the facts about this matter of selecting a Democratic Presidential nominee which the national convention of the party will settle in about five months. It is not proposed here to deal with issues, policies or principles. They will come later.

It is the personalities that first engage the attention. There are two of them—vibrant, vital fellows who loom so large in the Democratic picture as to obscure nearly every other figure—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Governor of New York, leading aspirant in the nomination race, and Alfred E. Smith, ex-Governor of that State, his party's candidate in 1928, and its titular leader now. Around these two the whole business revolves. Together they could easily dominate the whole Democratic situation. But they are apart—and that makes a great human political story—because their former friendship is party history. Also, it holds out the promise of a great, colorful fight in the convention. There is no space here to recount in detail the Smith-Roosevelt association prior to 1930. Nor is it worth while to argue whether Smith is under obligations to Roosevelt for twice placing him in nomination for the Presidency, and yielding to Smith's personal plea to run for Governor to help him. Just as good an argument can be made on the other side.

It is contended that nominating Smith was an honor many coveted and gave Roosevelt a national prominence he would not otherwise have had. It is further contended that persuading him to run for Governor gave him his chance at the Presidency. So far as obligation goes it seems to be an even break, but it isn't important either way. The interesting point is how, when and why did these loving party brothers separate—and are they going to stay that way? No one can tell with surety but it looks exceedingly likely. At the moment, all of Al's friends, personal as well as political, are exceedingly hostile to Roosevelt, and all of Al's enemies are for him. The dry West and South, which accepted Al reluctantly in 1928, are for Roosevelt with considerable solidity. They give him such strength that it is perfectly clear, had he Al, he would be nominated by acclamation. Even

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with an inactive, neutral, uninterested Al, he probably would be named on an early ballot. But with an Al militantly determined that he shall not be named, actively asserting his power, leading the fight against him, why then he is sunk and a compromise candidate—Baker or Ritchie—will be inevitable. Because, there is not the least doubt at all that with the "favorite son" delegations, always ready to join a movement to stop the leader, Al has a sufficient number of States east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio to muster more than the necessary one-third to exercise the veto power. Practically every posted political observer agrees as to that. The question is will he do it? Will he go the limit and, rallying behind him the business as well as political elements in the East, which regard Roosevelt with distaste, thrust him aside? Or, grown fattish and richish and softish, will he shrink from a battle, and sulkily acquiesce in the selection—perhaps even name the man he does not want? Those in best position to know the real Smith feelings are of the opinion he will not shrink. So am I.

And that brings us back to the cause of the breach. Various explanations have been advanced but none seems quite adequate. It has, for example, been asserted that the real trouble is that Smith would like another chance at the Presidency and naturally resents the Roosevelt candidacy for that reason. But that is hard to believe, and I do not believe it. For one thing, to accept that you must regard Smith as a dog-in-the-mangerish person, who can't get what he wants himself but does not want any one else to have it. Concede that once a man gets within reach of the White House the desire to attain that goal never leaves him. Concede that Smith knows, as every one knows, that if he could run against Hoover again his chances of winning would be infinitely better. Concede that he would give a year of his life for another shot at the target. Concede all that, and still the argument does not hold, because the fact that Smith cannot be nominated in the next convention is too clear to dispute. I know of no balanced politician or informed observer who thinks he could. If Smith himself thinks so, then he has completely lost his sense of reality. Four years ago he was the four times elected Governor of New York, the single outstanding man in the party, the logical and inevitable nominee. There was but one argument against him—his religion—and it was unthinkable the Democratic party could reject him on that ground. The South and the West reluctantly accepted him and the Democratic leaders in those sections went through a dreadful campaign that nearly destroyed many of them—and really did some. They underestimated the terrible forces of bigotry and unreason and they paid a pretty big price.

Smith is in no such position now as in 1928. He is not now a triumphantly re-elected Governor of the greatest State. He is a defeated candidate for President, with vastly more party strength in the East than any other individual but with a lowered prestige and no demand at all for his renomination from any section. On the contrary, the mere suggestion of having to make another campaign for Smith, with the opening up again of the religious issue which would be involved, offends and affrights the South and West to such an extent that they would stampede in any direction to avoid it. To a considerable extent this accounts for the degree with which these sections, almost without solicitation, have flopped into the Roosevelt lap. Even in the so-called Smith States of the East, where the organization leaders will follow his advice, there is neither expectation nor real desire for his renomination. So far as Smith is concerned, the door is closed. That is the simple truth and there seems no sense in not stating it. Moreover, there is every reason to think that Smith knows this as well as any one else.

There is at this writing a possibility that he may enter the Presidential primaries in certain New England States, as he is being urged to do, but that will be for the purpose of holding these delegations away from Roosevelt rather than as a bona-fide candidate himself. He is far too clear-headed for that, and so I think the idea that the breach is due to the Smith feeling that he should again be the party standard bearer can be dismissed.

By some it has been held that the resentment of Smith dates from last March when the Roosevelt influence frustrated the Raskob effort to have the national committee adopt his wet proposal for the convention. Undoubtedly that endeared Mr. Roosevelt to Southern and Western drys, who felt he sympathized with their acute local problems and that the Raskob-Smith combination was bent on thrusting upon them a situation fraught with per-

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sonal political peril. This may have accentuated Smith's feeling and it was at this time that he curtly declined to answer the question of whether he favored Roosevelt's candidacy, but it wasn't the cause of the separation. The rift was discernible to the acute before that. The committee incident did inflame Mr. Raskob but that was a trivial matter. Mr. Raskob in politics is exactly what Mr. Smith makes him. By himself, he is just a naïve amateur with an inaccurate idea of the importance his money mortgage on the party gives him and an amazing awkwardness at the political game. He is a party liability, not an asset. Incidentally, he seems in a fair way to get most of his money back, which, even in this time of unemployment, is a good thing. Immediately after the convention, regardless of who the nominee may be, the obscurity from which he sprang in 1928 will completely envelop him again.

To return to the rift, it is suggested that perhaps Roosevelt is not wet enough for Smith and he dislikes Roosevelt's flirtation with the drys. That hardly holds water because Roosevelt is flatly and unequivocally on record for repeal, has been as wet as Smith in two campaigns, personally has the same views of Prohibition, has repeatedly expressed them. As for flirting with the drys, Smith is too intelligent not to know that you have to have dry votes from dry States to get two-thirds or even a majority of the Democratic convention. He knows, as every one knows, that the wet States by themselves cannot nominate. If he were friendly to Roosevelt he would regard it as merely sensible politics not to stress Prohibition inopportunely until his nomination is assured. If he had been friendly toward Franklin he would hardly object to that remark a year or so ago that Prohibition is a secondary issue and economic questions of first importance now. Nearly everybody thinks that anyhow.

Then, it has been said that Smith did not care for Roosevelt's sponsorship of the Seabury investigation of the Tammany city government. Obviously that is weak. Smith is just as much revolted at graft as Roosevelt, probably would have done the same thing in favoring the investigation, but he would have done it with a great deal more vigor and force and effectiveness. It was not that, nor was it the Forestry Amendment, which last November Smith opposed and Roosevelt favored, nor is it the Roosevelt taxation policy or power policy. In the main these were Smith policies and the deviations are not in any way vital. Some time ago a story was current in Washington that last May, on his way back from French Lick, Roosevelt, stopping off in Ohio, talked with a friend of Smith's and generally conveyed the idea that as Governor, Smith had gotten a great deal more credit than he was entitled to, or words to that effect. This, it was said, was promptly relayed back to Smith and made Al mad. If it happened—of course it did, because Al is very proud—and justly so—of his Gubernatorial record. There is nothing he would more quickly resent than an aspersion upon it. But it did not happen—at least I completely disbelieve it. In the first place, it is merely a Washington story, and there is no place in the world where more unfounded stories are put into circulation than in Washington. There are people there who make a business—almost a profession—of manufacturing and purveying them. The amazing thing is the extraordinary number of people who believe them—or rather it is amazing until you look at the shape of their heads. In the second place, Mr. Roosevelt may not be the most intelligent man in the world, but certainly he is much too intelligent to make a comment like that at this time about Smith—or, anyway, if he had to make the comment, to pick out a man known to be close to Smith as an audience. The thing is just incredible and can be dismissed.

I have talked with a good many people close to both these men as to the reasons for the rift. Some of them contribute one thing, some another; not one can cite a concrete incident that seems adequate. My own conviction is that there has been no single big cause, but that what happened in this case is what happens in so many cases where men drift apart—it is due to an accumulation of little things, and inherent defects in temperament that prevent freedom of communication and build up a strained relation. Smith is a proud man slightly touched, as many proud men are, with vanity. So is Roosevelt. They are proud in different ways, vain about different things, but each proud—and each vain. It seems probable that Smith, as the titular party leader, resented the fact that Roosevelt has not deferred to him more both as to New York affairs and national politics. On the other hand, Roosevelt probably from the start had a desire to show that he was not, as Governor, under Smith's tutelage either

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as to state administration or party politics. Also, it is certain that, pretend as he has for months that nothing is farther from his thoughts than the Presidency, from the day of his re-election White House dreams have occupied the Roosevelt mind day and night. Every re-elected New York Governor is filled with these dreams. It is natural he should be. The New York Governorship is the great springing board for the Presidency. It is absurd for a New York Governor, twice elected, to pretend the year before the campaign that he gives no thought to national politics. Particularly it is absurd when his closest political friends scour the country for delegates and are conducting an active campaign for him, and his Presidential chances have been discussed in every newspaper in the country for two years. It is easy to conceive that a lack of frankness on this subject should have irritated Smith, that he may have felt he was entitled to be asked at the start for his support and approval. It is also easy to conceive Roosevelt reluctant to make any such request. That Rooseveltian pose that "I am devoting all my time to the job to which I was elected and not thinking of the future" may have been all right for general consumption but any one can understand it wouldn't go very well with Al. It may be Al felt he was being good-naturedly patronized—and that is not calculated to promote friendship.

Then there was the fact that Al's personal friends were not Roosevelt's close personal friends—not one of them. When Al was at Albany he had a small, unofficial cabinet—the really brilliant Mrs. Henry Moskowitz, the able Judge Proskauer and several others—with whom he advised and whose members had his complete confidence. Not one of these survived the first Roosevelt administration. Some, like Mrs. Moskowitz, pulled away voluntarily, but others were dropped overboard. An entirely new group surrounds the Governor, for none of whom Smith cherishes affection. There is the further fact that important Democrats in the business world—not Raskob—close to Smith, do not want Roosevelt nominated, have been against him from the start, regard him as a weak man, prefer Young or Ritchie or Baker. Undoubtedly these men have had an effect upon Al. He is more or less a big-business man himself these days. His heart still beats for the common people but he talks the big-business language.

Now, then, putting wholly aside the notion that something concrete happened to estrange these two men, sum all these things up and you have a total that easily accounts for their present strained relations—particularly if you happen to know them personally and appreciate the ways in which they diverge as well as the points they have in common. At any rate, the estrangement is a fact recognized in every newspaper in the land and by every politician. It has been journalistically asserted a hundred times that the Smith element of the party in the East is determined to prevent Roosevelt's nomination. Smith's closest friends make no secret of their feeling and desire. Smith himself avoids any public word on the question, but is reliably reported in private conversation to refer to Roosevelt as "that feller." It is impossible not to believe that his own sentiments are not reflected by those with whom he is in closest contact. Every one of them is anti-Roosevelt. So there you are. Personally, I have no faith at all in the permanency of either political enmities or friendships, and thus, unlikely as it now seems, am prepared to find in the convention these two outstanding party figures again clasped in each other's arms. Things like that happen in politics. Look, for example, at Borah, the greatest clasper we have. Taft, Harding, Coolidge, Curtis—opposed to them all and to all for which they stood, yet one after another he clasped them to his rugged Idaho bosom. And who doubts that he will again clasp the unfortunate Hoover this fall? Already, scattered here and there in the bewildering personal publicity which gushes from him in unceasing flow, are to be seen signs of his once more becoming moistly affectionate and regularly Republican. It may be that way with Al. We may discover early this summer that he really has been fond of "this feller" all the time and dissembled his love solely for his own good. Al may turn out to be a clasper too. But I do not think so. On the contrary, it seems to be increasingly evident that he is going to ditch "this feller" if he can, that not to make the effort would be to let his friends down, and that he will not do that. Moreover, if he is sufficiently determined, what with one thing and another, the chances are he can do it, too. But that's a story for another day.

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Love's a Grown-Up God

A COMPLETE SHORT NOVEL

By Arthur Tuckerman

A romantic story in the modern world told from a sophisticated point of view. The fourth selection in the $5,000 Contest is not only a story of different kinds of love but of different races.

"But the heavens that angel trod
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's A Grown-Up God—"
—"ISRAFEL," EDGAR ALLAN POE.

PART ONE

IN the autumn of 1917 my mother shipped me from her Florentine palazzo to Oxford. They tell me that in those days I was a supercilious young cub, very slim and dark and elegant in my English clothes, a kind of pocket-edition of a man-about-town. I have no doubt that I was quite objectionable. I had been going to day school in Florence for a number of years and was, as my mother expressed it, getting just a bit soft. My mother was a worldly woman, and although her original pattern of American illusions had long since been torn to shreds by my irresponsible father, and by twenty years of exile from her native land, she still possessed a furtive admiration for the Anglo-Saxon virtues—particularly when manifested in the male of the species.

I have no idea how she raised the money for my Oxford career, but some Florentines asserted that she deliberately pawned the Jenesta pearls with a jeweller on the Ponte Vecchio. At any rate, I thought it wiser not to inquire into the matter—for fear that one of those illogical Anglo-Saxon scruples, which I seem unexpectedly to have inherited, might put an end to my higher education. One thing was certain: my father, Count Rafael Jenesta, did not contribute a lira toward my final polishing. He was too busy, in a Roman club, gambling away the remains of my mother's Californian inheritance.

I remember well when she said good-by to me. She was sitting on the edge of her bed in a padded, plum-colored dressing gown. She had just had a henna rinse, and was looking tired about the eyes. She was living in a small room under the roof at the time, because the ceiling of her own colossal and gilded chamber had cracked, and because—with Oxford on the horizon—she couldn't afford to have it repaired. She was a tremendously good woman, with a profound sense of duty concealed under an artificial exterior. Now, looking back on it all, I realize that I am indebted to her, and to her alone, for any decency of character which may possibly reveal itself in this story of my youth, of my friendship with Paul Drury, and of that crisis which followed his strange marriage to Natia Palieff. Honor where honor is due.

She gave me one piece of advice, before I left. "I don't suspect you of being a saint," she said. "Not with your father's blood in you—" And here she smiled, faintly and sadly. "But don't be a young fool. Steer clear of tobacconists' daughters. I've heard that they are traditional in Oxford—almost part of taking your degree. Remember that it's difficult and dangerous to mix that kind of thing with your education. One does it more gracefully later on—if one has to do it."

What a sound, sensible, broad-minded mother she was! Her attitude was exactly suited to the tumultuous upheaval in which we were living. For Europe, since August, 1914, had been facing every

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kind of reality—and even mothers had been forced to do so. I left Florence filled with the tenderest sentiments towards her.

In those middle days of the war Oxford was a place of sad and tranquil beauty. With the bell voices of her spires muted by police orders, with proud Cornmarket and "The High" cringing in complete darkness, after five o'clock, from the eyes of possible enemy aircraft, I and the undergraduates of my time soon became aware that we had not known the real Oxford, and perhaps never would know it. We failed to recapture the voice of youth from that far-away era which had existed before August, 1914, and which now seemed to us, looking back upon it, to have been a period of lavish gaiety and incredible irresponsibility. It was hard indeed to believe that such times had been true. Our buildings and passages of gray lichened stone, our ivied cloisters, were but dormant shells deserted by hilarious spirits, and now inhabited by grave young men lost in the contemplation of their own highly enigmatic futures.

In Christ Church, for instance, our own sacred Tom Quad no longer staged some barbaric frieze of undergraduates, rioting around a bonfire after a rugger match. We had to imagine such things. . . . Instead, Tom Quad framed a geometrical pattern of Royal Flying Corps cadets, manœuvring precisely in the rising vapor of an English dusk. In later life, I am sure, all this must have had an effect upon us. It must have gone far toward promoting that scepticism with which I eventually faced a shattered and bewildered Europe. And, conversely, by the long, silent hours of introspection it permitted, it must have gone far toward developing that amazing idealism which nearly wrecked Paul Drury's life.

Paul was eighteen—my own age—when I met him during that first term. He was thin, almost fragile-looking, with wavy, wheat-colored hair. He had sensitive, finely moulded features, and that intangible dreaminess in the eyes which one associates with creative people. A type novel enough to me, since all my friends at home had been worldly little devils who prided themselves upon their out-and-out materialism. There was, however, a mitigating flicker of humor about Paul's sensitive, keen features which encouraged me to turn to him for companionship. And, God knows, I needed company. I was lonely and sceptical of the English in those days—because I had not yet learned to understand them.

During that first dreary winter term we became good friends. There were very few of us at Christ Church, anyway—"The House," as we called it—and Paul's rooms on Peckwater Quad were fairly close to mine, so that we often dropped in to see each other. I found him a thoughtful fellow, with a prodding, speculative mind. And at eighteen there was a quiet dignity about him, a maturity, which few of my volatile Florentine friends possessed. He was gentle rather than assertive; but his gentleness —in the way he spoke to servants, for instance— only emphasized the subdued and steady force, the self-discipline underlying his whole nature.

He was an orphan, the son of a high dignitary of the Church of England—the best kind of background, in the English sense. Apart from the matter of companionship, he interested me because he was a revelation of the Anglo-Saxon mentality. He had the almost mannerless good manners of the English, and my Italian friends during the holidays seemed almost florid in comparison. Another of his very English qualities was his opacity as to motives. As a foreigner, used to rapid and lucid fashions of speech and thought, he appeared to think, act, and speak through a confused process of instinct. This inarticulateness puzzled me, and one day I tackled him about it. For I knew that the theses and compositions he turned in to his tutors were marvels of clarity and elegant prose. I'd once seen a beautiful thing he'd written, about Daphnis and Chloe. . . .

"Paul," I asked him, just after the winter holidays, "why the devil can't you write a decent letter, or express yourself in speech? Your post-cards are like a kindergarten pupil's."

He chuckled, and tried to explain.

"One simply doesn't barge into one's friends' lives with a lot of rhetoric. Leave that to the pedants and writer chaps."

"But you mean to write yourself some day," I insisted.

"Sure," he said. "Sure." He'd picked the word up from an American at Balliol, and liked it because of its briskness. "But that's Shop, don't you see, Tony, Old Man? Can't be professional in one's private life, or people would take one for a blasted poseur. I suppose its different with you Latin chaps.

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You express yourselves naturally, by nature. But it's harder with us. What we feel, we don't say. . . ." He flushed uncomfortably.

"Then," I exclaimed, "you don't feel what you write—even when you're writing professionally. Shop, as you call it. Which means that whatever you accomplish will be bad art, because it will be insincere."

"Oh, rot," he said, and walked over to the fireplace to tap the ashes from his pipe. I saw triumphantly that I had at last goaded him from his habitual reticence toward the thing that mattered. He turned to me with a half-abashed expression. "I feel things. I feel them . . . only too damned deeply. You Latins always think that you have a monopoly on emotions. But, good God, I think there's enough sublimity and enough degradation in the world to keep a writer busy for five hundred years without stopping! There's God, and there's Man, and there are creatures half-way between—like that blessed little colt suckling its mother on Iffley Road yesterday. And there are creatures forgotten by God and by Man, like that poor, damned little consumptive whore we saw kicked out of Buol's Cafe the other night. Did you see the look in her eyes? . . . Oh, those things will go into my books. But it will be a sort of closed door, don't you see? Not like airing one's puny groping to one's friends. I loathe publicity and flattery. They corrode your soul when you're trying to accomplish something. . . . I'd even use a *nom de plume,* if I ever had the luck to publish."

After that brief glimpse under the veneer I felt that I knew and understood him better. And I recalled a saying of my mother's: "The English take a lot of knowing. . . ."

During our second year the university roster became cruelly abbreviated. Those of us who remained were mostly Americans, a sprinkling of Continentals like myself, and a few Englishmen too young for military service or unfit for it. The rest had gone forth behind loud brass bands to Ypres, Gallipoli, Iracq, and the North Sea. It was only natural, I suppose, that this backdrop of Armageddon promoted a certain soberness in our college careers. We couldn't very well embark upon an evening's inebriation in a private dining-room at the Mitre Hotel, when the very newspaper posters shouted tragedy at us; when the very men we'd been talking to a month earlier were lying gaping under some Asiatic sun. Even for foreigners like myself, it wasn't much fun to move in civilian clothes, mufti, amidst those khaki crowds and shouted newspaper extras.

Paul, being more sensitive, less logical than myself, allowed all this to prey on his mind. He was underweight, delicate, for the army; and, also, he'd revealed a remarkable aptitude for classic prose—so much so, in fact, that there was a conspiracy among his tutors to make him remain and take his degrees. "You'd be no use out there," old Ogilvie, his history tutor, told him bluntly. "They'd wipe you out in a few days—with rheumatism, or diarrhœa, or something equally unheroic. . . . When it's all over we'll need men like you—to preserve a bit of the old world that they're so rapidly destroying."

But Paul couldn't see it in that light. One March evening he returned to Oxford, white as death, from a day's trip to London. Some old hag had handed him a white feather in Piccadilly. He rushed in to see me, flinging his overcoat into a chair, and began pacing up and down the room.

"Old Man, I can't go on like this." He passed his hand over his brow, pushing back his pale hair. His face was like a soul shining through a translucent shell of skin. "I simply can't. Just because all these bloody old fossils want me to stay and write pretty things for them. I'm going up to town to-morrow—to join the ranks."

"Join the ranks?" I repeated. "My dear ass. You could get a commission like a shot. Choose your own regiment. Every one knew your father——"

"That's not my idea of it," he interrupted. "If I go into this thing, I go with the crowd. I wouldn't like to wangle a cushy job. That's not in my line. There's too much wangling going on, anyway."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Those damned ideals of yours. I know you pretty well by now. I suppose you don't realize that you'd do far more good with a commission. You must be practical. If you go on facing life like this you'll be a child at sixty."

"I'd love to be a child at sixty," he said softly. "How I detest this infernal modern scepticism about everything. Scepticism, cynicism, and boredom. All the allied evils. No beauty, no progress, ever came from a destructive outlook. I admit that I have ideals—even illusions, if you choose to call

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them that. And I don't want to lose them."

"Then you'd better get a nursemaid," I told him angrily. "And, certainly, you must keep away from the trenches. They won't supply you with any heavenly pictures."

"But, don't you see?" he cried, rumpling his hair, striding up and down the room. "Don't you see that ideals and illusions fortify a man? Otherwise he is just of the earth, in his most primitive state. Ideals don't weaken humanity. That's a lot of Nietzchean filth! You Latins, for instance. You're so blastedly proud of your logic. Yet Rome wasn't built by logic. It was built by courage, and vision, and by—by taking a chance. . . . I know that you're contemptuous of my own muddled sort of philosophy. Yet, somehow, I know that I'm right. To do what one feels is the decent thing. . . . . Fairplay sort of idea, and damnation to the logic."

"It's all very absurd," I sighed. "Yet thanks to my American mother I can understand parts of it. But I'm afraid for you, Paul, when you put on that khaki and go forth to Boulogne, or wherever they send you, looking like Saint George in search of his dragon. That is the certain road to misery. If you saw what a stinking mess war really is, you'd at least have the sense to provide yourself with a decent job in it. Even men going to the scaffold have been known to eat a large breakfast."

"Thanks," he said wryly. And then, after a pause: "How about you, Old Man? Going to drift along here—now that Italy's thoroughly in it?"

"Oh, I'll do the right thing," I assured him. "I won't disgrace my family or my friends. I'll run down to Milan and look up my rich Uncle Enrico. And I'll choose the pick of his Red Cross fleet of ambulances—an Isotta if I can get one. And I'll probably spend the rest of the war taking venereal cases from the Stazione Centrale to the General Hospital."

A silence fell between us men. I think we were both distressed at the revelation of a sharp and sudden divergence in our fundamental philosophies. We had suspected it, of course, all along; but it was the first time we had laid our cards on the table. And at that age abstracts meant a great deal to us. If we had been older we'd have known that friendships didn't totter because of theoretical differences.

The next morning he took the 10.55 to London, and enlisted.

He joined the Royal Flying Corps. He didn't want a commission immediately, but some brass-hat, with an unusual degree of perception for a brass-hat, found him in overalls repairing magnetos at Upavon, and whisked him out of the ranks. I lounged on for another term at Oxford and, to my own surprise, passed my preliminary exams in Modern History. Then I decided to call it a day. I said good-by to old Ogilvie, and all the rest, and trained down to Milan.

I made a valiant attempt to join the infantry—I suppose it was some windy hangover from Paul's idealism which made me do it—but they turned me down; because of some alleged peculiarity in my feet which I had not suspected, and have never since been able to discover. After that I went to my rich Uncle Enrico, and became a Red Cross driver, exactly as I had predicted. They sent me to Ancona where, during a winter inundated by rain and cognac, I managed to break an arm trying to crank a Locomobile truck. Then I was shifted to light duty at Spezia, which consisted in carrying elated sailors from the *molo* to whatever dubious forms of gaiety the town could offer. It was an inglorious military career, confirming my suspicions that most of us were not destined to become heroes, whether or not we desired such status. Oxford receded into the past, a decorous and gentlemanly dream of life without serious issues or serious passions. I heard nothing from Paul.

On an April evening in 1919 I found Paul Drury.

I had been sent up to Munich by an Italian newspaper, to investigate the political turmoil in Bavaria. The newspaper was my mother's idea. In that year of vitality and virility and chaos which followed the termination of the war in Italy, she saw that it was not only fashionable but imperative for young men of the leading families to exchange their dinner coats for shirt sleeves. She was quick at sizing up the public tempo. So she hurried to Milan, interviewed a friend, the publisher of an important newspaper, and insisted that I be placed on his staff. I was an Oxford man; I could write; I spoke four languages fluently. . . . She succeeded in her efforts. Actually, I enjoyed my new career—but not quite as much, I think, as she did. She got a great deal of fun out of it, to use her own words. In the palazzo she would raise her hands in aristocratic horror, saying over her teacup: "My dear, we must *all* put our shoulder to the wheel, for the

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good of the country. If you could *see* how hard my poor Tony is working . . ."

I was asking for my mail from the reception clerk at the Bayerischerhof when Paul came up alongside me. At first, although I heard him demanding a room, refusing to believe that the hotel was full, I didn't recognize him. Then he turned away from the desk with a little movement of despair—and we met, face to face. His appearance appalled me. He had a strange, waxen pallor, and his cheap suit of shoddy Bavarian cloth hung from his body like clothes upon a hanger. His eyes seemed to have grown enormous, and there was a great shining light in them.

"I'm free!" were the first words he said. He gripped my hand and held onto it, staring at me as if I were a vision—something out of another world, which he couldn't quite grasp. "I'm free," he said. "Out of prison to-day!"

And he told me his story.

I still like to think of that moment in Paul's life when the Ober-Leutnant at Schloss Radnitz handed him his papers and clicked his heels. Free! After eighteen months of high walls and cobbled courtyards, since the day he'd lost a rudder behind the German lines near Lille. Free, on an April morning! The sky was a gentle pale wash of blue and, Paul said, all the little hills around Radnitz were in a white foam of cherry blossoms. The gabled roofs of the old Bavarian houses were etched sharp and clear, a pattern of faded pink angles against that kind young sky. An ecstatic and religious exaltation pervaded him as he stepped out into the sunshine. He had been spared. That was the one thought that gripped his soul. Spared by a merciful providence, when men all around him had died, gone blind, lost their reason. For Radnitz—God knew—had its own fair share of insanity, disease, and suicide—like any other prison.

Sitting there, talking with him in that smoke-laden hotel lounge over our whiskies-and-sodas, it dawned upon me that his faith had developed into a quietly beautiful thing, a symphonic accompaniment to his whole life. But I was afraid for him. Literally afraid. He was entirely concerned with abstract matters, ideas. The bloody mess we'd all waded through had simply turned his eyes toward the clouds. He was like a man stumbling through the world in a dream.

"What about the future?" I asked him.

He said slowly: "I intend to write, Old Man." His face lighted up with a brilliant smile. "All my faith has been proved," he said, gripping my arm. "Now it's up to me, as the Americans say. All those chaps dead, bleeding, or mad, and here I am—scott free. It doesn't seem fair somehow. . . . I did a fearful lot of thinking at Radnitz, and I decided on what I could do best—" Here he paused and flushed a little. "—I'd try to recapture, with a kind of measured, thoughtful prose, that innocent old world which all those chaps died for, hoping to preserve. Do you see what I'm driving at? A sort of tribute which would survive. . . . So that the new lot would understand us, and perhaps forgive us for the mess we got them into. . . ."

He looked at me doubtfully, as if afraid of my verdict. But, naturally, I wasn't going to plunge in and shatter an idea so tenuous yet so spiritually beautiful. I, too, had matured. And I had learned to control my confounded scepticism, at least outwardly. But I saw that his exile had sheltered him, so far, from all the harshness and the doubts and the bitterness which now filled the universe. And the world, sitting on its haunches and licking its wounds, would have little patience with his noble probings into a dead past. So I kept my mouth closed, except to ask: "Where would you do this work?"

"In England. I'm in key there. I was born for quiet, gray places. I'd like one of those little stone houses in the Cotswolds, bordering a sheep meadow."

This brought us back to Oxford.

"So far off," he mused. "Such a vague, childish little world. So unsuspecting. . . . But it produced some splendid men. Remember old Ogilvie, my history tutor? At fifty-three, mind you, he joined up as a ground officer in the R.F.C.—because the last of his brood had left Oxford. As a matter of fact, I'm on my way now to look him up in Switzerland. A subaltern called Fuller, who came into Radnitz last August, told me that the Germans had captured him, flying as an observer. Now he's convalescing at a place in the hills near Montreux; and I'm going to find him, because he's a link with the past."

I asked him when he was leaving Munich.

"Day after to-morrow," he said. "Funny thing. After I'd found him I meant to look you up in Italy. I hadn't your address, but I remembered that you lived in Florence."

There was something essentially touching, I

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thought, in that determined pilgrimage to round up his tiny circle of friends, the survivors of a world he had loved. And while thinking of his lonely journey toward the Swiss mountains, I found myself saying: "I'll go with you, if you like, and help you find Ogilvie. I have a few days to spare before I'm due back in Milan."

An obscure loyalty, I suppose, prompted me. I wasn't enthusiastic about that journey. It sounded far from amusing. And as soon as I'd made my promise I was quite pleased at the revelation of a new and unselfish aspect of my nature. Paul was delighted. "Decent of you," he said. "Damn decent of you. One can always count on friends."

After a while he remarked: "I'd better be doing something about getting a room somewhere. This place is full. There isn't space for an extra cot in your billet by any chance?"

And so the awkward question arose.

"I can't ask you to share my room," I told him. "It's already being shared."

"Ah," he said. "Some other chap. An Italian?"

"No, Paul. A lady . . ."

I knew that he would have to meet Carlotta sooner or later. She was out at the moment, buying face powder, soap, and things of that kind, after our long, fatiguing journey from Milan.

"You'll have the pleasure of meeting a very charming woman in a few minutes," I told him. "Her name is Carlotta Riva. She was married to an Italian, but her parents were Austrian."

He nodded slowly. I remembered the purity of his attitude toward women in Oxford, and I said gently: "Two lonely souls, I think, have a right to pool their loneliness and disappointments in all this chaos, provided that they are not hurting anyone——"

"My dear man," he protested. "My dear man—" He was horribly embarrassed. "I've seen the world. I'm not a child. If you're happy . . ."

Carlotta came through the revolving door just then, looking particularly sweet in her gray furs and an exquisite little tilted fur toque. The evening had turned chilly and her plump cheeks were like ripe red pippins. The inevitable bang of curly blond hair framed her blue eyes, and she had—as usual—her serene smile, a smile which had braved far more troubles and miseries than were allotted to the average mortal. That little blond bang over her eyes gave her a permanent air of impudence, and I often used to tell her that she was like some small, brisk terrier.

She at once guessed who Paul was, and beamed upon him. She said, in her delightful Austrian accent which pronounced each syllable carefully and had a slightly throaty inflection: "I am very pleased to see you here, because Tony has so often spoken of you. It is a fine thing for a man to have a true friend."

I told her of my intended trip to Switzerland with him. Later, I said, I would join her in Milan. She understood perfectly, as she always did. One never had to elaborate with her, as one is compelled to do with some women. "Of course," she said. "You mustn't worry about me, Tony. You must always feel free."

When she had gone up to our room I could see that Paul was puzzled. Probably he was wondering why I hadn't married her. That eternal Anglo-Saxon habit of confusing love and matrimony. And so I told him briefly of her married life with Cæsar Riva, that wild scapegoat I had known in Florence; of his brutality towards her; and of the brutality of his stupid, narrow-minded family toward her when Italy went into the war, because she was an Austrian—as if she, poor child, was the cause of their ultimate suffering. I told him of her divorce, and of her poverty when I found her, just after the armistice, exercising her moderate talents as a singer in a Genoa cabaret. I tried to picture to him the obvious dignity and breeding with which she carried on her tawdry profession, and the physical integrity she had managed to maintain. For I believed Carlotta, and believed in her. She had a man's candor.

"She joined her life with mine," I concluded, "because of a fine, strong blend of affection and friendship, and because she was utterly lonely. She was an orphan, childless, and accountable to no one. She was escaping from poverty, isolation, and a lack of love. As for myself, there's no question of marriage for years to come. I haven't a lira to my name, except my insignificant earnings in journalism."

He listened patiently. And when I had finished he said very simply: "I understand. She is a lovely woman, and I think you are very lucky, Old Man. You've missed a lot of rottenness by finding her.

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NEW PATHS FOR AMERICA. III

Column Left

By Stuart Chase

The cross-roads in the United States have been reached. Is our destiny to be attained by continuing on the road of rugged individualism? Mr. Chase says no and points the direction we must take in order to develop. This is the third article in the group begun by Charles A. Beard's "A Search for the Centre" in the January SCRIBNER'S.

UTOPIA-MAKING is good fun, and so is sand sculpture at low tide. I know what path I should like to see my country take, but I can hardly expect her to take it. No prophecy is quite devoid of wish fulfilment, but let us try as honestly as may be to trace the curve of America's immediate economic future as it springs from the curve of her economic past. Thus we leap into space from firm ground. If I read the past aright, the course in the years before us veers to the left, in the direction of an increasing social control of industry. The extent of wish fulfilment in this conclusion I must perforce leave to your appraisal.

The American frontier, according to James Truslow Adams, ceased to exist about 1890. In that year the Bureau of the Census reported: "The unsettled area has been so broken by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line." The mental habits engendered by the frontier have continued to this day, however, exhibiting a cultural lag of more than four decades. Mr. Adams describes some of these habits and I have added a few more. They include:

An unlimited optimism as to the economic future. "The United States cannot be sold short." We still feel sure of an infinite frontier of land, minerals, forests, potential population.

The gospel of hard work and getting things done in a hurry. The compulsion of speed.

Engineering ingenuity and mechanical ability.

The worship of financial success. A toleration for the means provided the end of money-getting is achieved. The cloaking of business with moral sanctions (*vide* Bruce Barton), and the seating of the business man at the pinnacle of the Republic.

The gospel of getting by, and of getting away with it.

A gross callousness toward the waste of land and natural resources, and toward the æsthetics of land use. Stream pollution, litter, road-side slums.

A sturdy repugnance to all "foreign entanglements." There was more than enough work to be done at home.

The cheerful, nay, determined shoving of government into the hands of third-rate, easily manipulated men. It was assumed in a general way that a country of such unlimited resources did not need a government.

And, finally, a certain cowardice in facing economic realities. The pioneer was essentially a man so overborne with troubles at home that he preferred to take an axe and a covered wagon rather than remain and make a fight on the home front. This is particularly true of the great immigrant population. It chose escape as the easiest way out. The American frontier was the safety valve of popular economic unrest not only for the Eastern states but for Europe as well.

Meanwhile economic facts have been moving relentlessly onward in a direction increasingly at variance with this typical American outlook and ideology. The most explosive fact of all is that the frontier ended forty years ago, leaving us without a safety valve for more than a generation. As Charles A. Beard says: "We are living on the husks of the nineteenth century." Almost as shattering is the fact that the curve of population is rapidly heading into a plateau, and Dublin tells us that along about 1960 we shall probably come to a dead level of one hundred and sixty millions or thereabouts. What with birth control and the restriction of immigration, the ever-expanding domestic market is doomed—certainly on the old gorgeous, automatic basis.

In the third place, the machine has bored so deeply into our economic structure that to-day a man can hardly do the simplest act—turn a faucet, go for a ride, smoke a cigarette, give a present to

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his sweetheart, listen to a song—without sending out economic waves which reverberate around the seven seas. We are at last locked into a structure so complicated, interrelated, far-flung and tenuous, that untold millions of delicate cogwheels must join if Sam Smith is to eat to-night or Mary Robinson to have a new dress upon her back to-morrow. While Americans still view foreign entanglements with a malevolent eye, and while, theoretically, we could be a nation largely self-contained, the cold facts are that we have loaned some twenty billions abroad in recent years, and come increasingly to depend on exports to keep our wheels turning and our wheat waving. Without a number of key products not procurable at home—such as rubber, nitrates, coffee, sugar—we should promptly be most seriously embarrassed. We could be far more self-sufficient than we are, but the point is that we have never taken the effort, beyond flag flapping and speech making, and are now, whether we like it or not, clamped into a world economy.

The collapse of the frontier was a serious business, but its effects were slow in making themselves felt so long as population increased rapidly, markets were maintained, business opportunities continued abundant, and mechanization was not too cataclysmically complicated. These mitigating factors were in evidence until well into the nineteen-twenties, aided by a wide-open immigration policy, by the fillip to business given by the war, and by the phenomenal passion of Americans to own and operate a motor car.

But at last the day of reckoning has come. Added to the usual downswing of the business cycle—a phenomenon we have known since the depression of 1819—we find ourselves with no frontier to which to escape. (Nor can we even eat on our highly specialized, one-crop farms.) The war fillip has faded out, indeed reversed itself, as the sad realization dawns that we have loaned the money to foreigners with which foreigners have paid for our industrial activity during the past decade. Now the loans are marked frozen, and our mile-high tariff iceberg has helped to freeze them. Our population growth is sluggish and promises to be more so, which brings real-estate values to a full stop if not to a back somersault. The whole theory of such values throughout the history of America has been to tie them to a mounting population curve. The future has already been capitalized and that future, according to Mr. Dublin, will probably not materialize.

We have oversold ourselves on gadgets pumped by the instalment plan, enormously extending an industrial plant for the production of luxuries and semi-luxuries which, in a crisis, people do not need to buy and frequently, in the teeth of the advertiser's psychologist, will not buy. A recent commentator has estimated that the margin of "consumer capriciousness" in the present domestic market is at least twenty-five per cent. No former depression has known such a margin, and the current slump is rendered the more severe by virtue of a huge new element of overproduction in the sense of excess-plant capacity in the luxury trades. Where, for instance, are the Tom Thumb golf courses of yesteryear?

We have oversold ourselves on securities, an ominous percentage of the offerings of the past decade coming under the head of beautifully engraved cats and dogs and foxes. Loans—tremendous loans—have been duly advanced on this menagerie. The whole credit structure has become involved, and sways dizzily, wracked with an alarming internal pain.

Lastly—the technological process having marched to the tune of rugged individualism, no man seeking to guide it or even to understand it—we find that the railroads have become technologically antiquated without our knowing it, and can never take their proud place again; and that the motor car, which gave us such a mighty impetus in the twenties, is destined for a *replacement* rather than a *new* market, never again to furnish a spear-head for prosperity. A day's study would have been sufficient to provide any intelligent person with the railroad curve. He need only have cast up the tonnage being torn away by the motor truck, the high-power transmission line, the oil-pipe line, the natural-gas long-distance line, the hydro and central-power station. The handwriting has been on the wall for a dozen years, but it is a script which neither Wall Street nor American ideology can read. In 1925 I foretold the end of the motor-car new market (I placed it a little too soon, not counting on the dying gasp of the two-cars-per-family campaign), but I was obviously a crabbed knocker, untrustworthy and un-American.

How, gentlemen, do you propose to circumvent

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this bill of particulars? Even if I have erred in one or two of them, enough remain to bring us to a halt. And to a full stop we have indeed come. The business and political captains have tried holding the right thought for two and a half years and the results of their efforts may be found deftly documented in *Oh, Yeah?*

Ruin, disaster, the end of the world? Not at all. At least not necessarily. We have come to the end of the classic American formula, nourished on the frontier, the population curve, the luck of our natural resources, of a profitable world war (for us), of a four-wheeled gadget carrying immense psychological appeal. Our basic physical plant was never in better shape, our fields never more fertile. Our natural resources are growing a bit ragged, but vast quantities remain; our population is still reasonably healthy, ingenious, and adaptable. All that has happened—to be sure it is enough—is that the credit structure has jammed, the guiding formula has collapsed, and we are face to face with reorganizing the nation on the basis of economic stability rather than zooming speculation. For all I know, the Florida boom and the Big Bull Market were the last two great joy rides of an epoch which has ended.

For the first time in our national history since the opening of the West, we have to deal with a roughly static rather than an ever-expanding structure, and, most painful of all, to discard frontier habits, ideologies and slogans, and begin to think. There is no prairie, no mountain, no forest, to which we can escape; there are no bounding real-estate values to cushion our industrial mistakes; we have at last to face real things in a real world, stand our ground and fight. Our luck has run out. Thinking is good once in a while for men and for nations. We might even get used to it, alien as the process is, and enjoy thinking our way out. We might, for all I know, become enormously stimulated and thrilled—like the Russians—in liquidating a bankrupt economic epoch and building a new and better one. All the raw materials are ready to hand. We have to deal with a slower tempo of economic expansion; with a closed frontier and a closed safety-valve; with a world in which rugged individualism is—and has been for forty years—an anachronism; with the possibility of another orgy of speculation—such as the Big Bull Market—completely outside the picture; with the stark necessity of national and regional economic planning.

I do not happen to belong to the "plan or perish" school—except in a very general way. We shall probably have to do some radical emergency planning immediately to get us through the depression, but a long-swing programme inaugurated in the next few months is not, in my opinion, the alternative to a general smash. We can probably muddle on for a few more years with temporary shots of adrenalin and temporary crutches. Planning is not a patent medicine which we must swallow or die, it is the inevitable answer to a chain of economic circumstances. The proponents of planning are under no compulsion to work out a complete blueprint, and, waving it at a recalcitrant business community, cry: Take this or expire! The logic of the circumstances which I have sought to recite above will force the business community, the government, the trade union, the public generally, to accept a new weapon for a new battle-front. Planning will probably make equal, if not greater, progress if its convinced advocates do no more than ask industrialist, banker, politician, merchant: Here are the conditions, what are you going to do? What are you going to do? What are you going to do? Conscious economic control rather than irresponsible drift is the only answer to these conditions. Sooner or later the fact will register in every intelligent brain. We are not necessarily doomed if we allow the registration process a reasonable time limit. Social habits have ever changed slowly.

If we do not plan constructively we shall not necessarily perish—just yet, as Veblen used to say. But we must certainly plan, and that soon, if American civilization is to go *forward*. The goals are already outlined with some clarity. They include:

The creation of national minimum living standards, below which no family, able and willing to work, shall be permitted to fall. The liquidation of economic insecurity on the basis of plain food, shelter, clothing, and education.

The conservation of natural resources.

The use of land for human living rather than for profitable speculation, entailing the end of Megalopolis with its compulsion of speed, noise, dirt, ugliness, and overcrowding. A wide extension of those areas devoted to natural beauty, sunshine, and first-hand recreation. Though the frontier has gone, we have plenty of land.

The education of the consumer to buy *goods* rather than jumping jacks, gadgets, and junk.

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To achieve these goals, we shall probably have to experiment with such technics and methods as:

A managed currency. The end of King Gold.

The strict supervision of new investment in order that it may be at once genuinely productive and reasonably safe. In return for safety, the rate must be modest.

A drastic revision in the distribution of the national income to maintain an adequate volume of mass purchasing power. Income and inheritance taxes are the most obvious agents in this connection.

An enormous increase in the endowment for medical, agricultural, and industrial research.

A drastic decline in high-pressure salesmanship.

The declaration that all basic and essential industries are affected with a public interest, subject to public regularization, stabilization, and control. This implies the Interstate Commerce Commission technique extended to power, coal, oil, lumber, wheat, cotton, textiles, steel, copper, chemicals, and other groups.

National and regional planning boards to co-ordinate these activities, and above all to prevent the crystallization of industrial progress.

Who is to grasp these goals and work out these technics? We hear to-day a great hue and cry over the lack of leadership. Our business men and statesmen have failed us in this crisis. As for our scientists and professional men, nobody has ever expected anything from them. Their only function in the American saga has been to grease the wheels. Well, what does one expect, a psychological miracle? Nature does not act that way; she is not in the habit of producing stars from a vacuum. We have no leadership, because, forsooth, after the opening of the West, we never needed any. We were a self-generating perpetual-motion machine. There was no function for overhead economic leadership; no school in which such leaders could be trained. For about fifteen months in 1917 and 1918 we started a school, and called it the War Industries Board. But the emergency over, that academy was promptly sunk in a sea of normalcy. (Oddly enough, if we are to survive 1932 without a major lesion, it will probably be some of these old pupils who will pull us through.)

New conditions will create leaders. The times will call forth the man. Where the leaders are I do not know—though I could, if pressed, perhaps remove a bushel or two. Nobody knows. But they will come. You, my friend, may be hiding a marshal's baton under your coat at this moment. And the path along which they shall lead us can bear only to the left. No more excursions into the petrified forests of rugged individualism. No more attempts—save perhaps by job-hunting executive secretaries—to keep government and business single and celibate. No more jogging placidly in the middle of the road. No more mass movements to the good old days when the easiest thing to do with an over-mortgaged house was to leave it to the mortgage-holder and take the sunset trail.

Right trails, centre trails, are also posted No Thoroughfare. The left road is the only road, and willy-nilly we must take it. Why? Because we cannot ride out this depression without taking it. We cannot cope with the complexities of a machine civilization, we cannot conserve our irreplaceable natural resources, we cannot build up popular purchasing power to buy back the commodities we can so readily make, we cannot get rid of unemployment and overproduction, we cannot keep our banks from freezing periodically, we cannot meet the challenge of Russia, which hour by hour climbs up the eastern sky, we cannot hold a people, some day overborne with misery and disillusion, from turning to the barricades—unless we take it.

Next month—Norman Thomas's belief about new paths for America, "Wanted —A New—and Honest—Political Deal." Frank Kent looks at the present political line-up. Will Rose reports what the small-town man thinks of the current chaos in "The Small Town Carries On." Roy Harris continues the revaluation of the creative arts in America, adding music to literature, discussed in the following pages by V. F. Calverton, and painting, about which Thomas Craven wrote last month.

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The Liberation of American Literature

By V. F. Calverton

The colonial complex has pervaded American culture. As Thomas Craven showed concerning art in "American Painters: The Snob Spirit" (February SCRIBNER'S*) so Mr. Calverton points out that American literature is only now shaking itself free from the cultural dominance of another country and is ready to go somewhere.*

It is only to-day, with the decay of England as the leading world power, that we have come to realize the extent to which our culture has been overwhelmed by British tradition. As a mother nation, superimposing its language upon its colonial possessions, England has exercised a profound and almost ineradicable influence upon four cultures: the American, the Australian, the Canadian, and the South African. No other modern nation has so completely dominated the cultures of its colonies. Obvious as this domination has been upon the spirit of these cultures as a whole, it is in the field of the arts, especially in that of literature, that its impact has been most conspicuous. Only the marked decline of this domination in recent decades, particularly since the World War, emphasized chiefly by the American escape from it, has made us fully cognizant to-day of the disastrous part which it has played in the past.

American literature began as a colonial literature, and it was as a result of its colonial heritage that it took on its early forms and convictions. Like every colonial literature, American literature inevitably suffered from all the handicaps of such a heritage: intellectual inferiority, artistic imitativeness, and cultural retardation. In its attempt to express itself it was devoted more to its maternal background than to its immediate environment.

As is the case with all colonies, the colonial environment becomes first a place upon which old traditions are fastened and not a setting in which new traditions are conceived. It is only as the colony grows away from its maternal matrix that a new tradition can arise. By that time, however, the old tradition in language, as well as in spirit, has rooted itself so deeply into the colonial culture that even that which aspires to be new is inevitably burdened with much that is old. Every colonial literature, we can say, therefore, goes through several stages of development: first, the stage of determined adaptation, in which the colonials attempt to adapt their original culture to the new environment, stressing continuity between the old and the new; secondly, the stage in which the colonials begin to become conscious of themselves,—national-minded, as it were,—and in which the new conditions have already begun to modify the old traditions to such an extent that differences become more important than resemblances; at this point the struggle for freedom from the mother culture becomes apparent, and revolt in favor of a national culture becomes active and aggressive, and the third stage is begun; in the fourth and final stage the colonial literature, if the colony grows of itself and the environment provides it with sufficient strength definitely to sever its umbilical connections with the mother country, manages to create a national literature of its own. In a fundamental sense, however, it must be remembered that no colonial literature ever succeeds in completely separating itself from its maternal origins. Its linguistic kinship alone links it in a most intimate way with the mother culture. For that reason one can see in American literature even to-day evidences of the fact that in certain respects it is still a colonial literature, although in the main, in recent years, it has undoubtedly begun to develop an American tradition.

Canadian, South African, and Australian literatures have all gone through certain of these stages, determined by the different economic and political factors involved. Canada has now reached the third

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stage, in which the literary prospectus of its writers is thoroughly Canadian; and their inspiration and ideals too are Canadian. But, even with these evidences, Canadian literature has not escaped the influence of the colonial complex any more than Australian literature—or than American literature had prior to the twentieth century. It is only in the fourth stage, which Canadian, South African, and Australian literatures have not yet reached, that the effects of the colonial complex can be considerably diminished if not altogether eliminated.

American literature alone of all these colonial literatures has entered the fourth stage of this process, the stage of emergence and escape from the colonial complex itself. The changes and conflicts occasioned by various stages in this process all find their reflection in American literature in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Our writers have been either openly imitative of their English contemporaries and predecessors, and obsequious of their approval, or they have been in definite revolt against them in an attempt to escape their dominance. This very struggle toward imitation, on the one hand, and toward revolt against imitation on the other, has exercised a most unhappy influence upon our literary life. It has throttled our creative energies, warped their expression, and, by setting them at cross purposes to each other, divided their strength and confused their aim. Like a youth who is ever seeking to emulate his father's attainments, but who is without his father's original advantages of age and strength, American literature failed to be itself, not because of its youth, as many have said, but because it tried to be old before it was young.

It was not until after the Revolutionary War that our authors became aware of the need to be American. The war itself, effecting the political separation of the colony from the mother country, created this need as part of the rising national consciousness. The need for political and economic separation, however, did not necessitate the need for cultural separation, for the American Revolution was not a cultural revolution at all. The same traditions which prevailed before the Revolution persisted after it, with the exception that protest against their English origins grew more manifest. In time this protest became vociferous. Nevertheless, its whole expression was futile. The conditions of American life, the status of the American nation, were in conspiracy against its success. Political emancipation alone is not sufficient to establish cultural independence, for culture has its roots in economic ways of life that are deeper than politics. That England continued to dominate American culture long after its political hegemony had been overthrown is not surprising, therefore, when we realize that, however strenuously a colony may struggle to free itself of its maternal influence, its earlier attitude of inferiority is bound to linger until it is the economic equal of the mother country.

Despite the fact that America had won its political independence in the eighteenth century, the fight for cultural independence continued with even greater intensity in the nineteenth. Poe stressed "the need of that nationality which defends our own literature, sustains our own men of letters, upholds our own dignity, and depends upon our own resources," for, as he added, "in letters as in government we require a Declaration of Independence." Nathaniel Willis, who was the witty fop of the forties, and the critic who later was to become Poe's unflinching advocate in the controversy with Griswold after Poe's death, was a still more vehement Americanophile. Even before the Civil War this fervor for literary independence was active in the South as well as in the North, as the writings of William Gilmore Simms, the well-known South Carolina poet, testify. Cooper's observation was similar. "The American who wishes to illustrate and enforce the peculiar principles of his own country by the agency of polite literature," Cooper wrote, "will for a long time to come find that his constituency is still too much under the influence of foreign theories to receive them with fervor." As late as 1869, James Russell Lowell took up the cudgels in defense of Americanism. "We are worth nothing," Lowell exhorted, "except so far as we have disinfected ourselves of Anglicism." Always on the defensive, an attitude of mind which was a direct outgrowth of the sense of inferiority which was part of our colonial complex, we were ever anxious not to be treated as "inferior and deported Englishmen," and it was against such treatment that Lowell directed his salvos.

Despite these assertions of independence, and despite these valiant efforts to abandon English materials and exploit American, the influence of England was not destroyed. In point of fact the colonial

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complex continued to function throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, these very assertions of independence, with their attendant excess of desire to dwell upon American things and American things only, which amounted almost to an intellectual obsession, were attestations of inferiority rather than of confidence.

It would be a mistake, however, to infer that the colonial complex was fundamentally psychological in origin. On the contrary, its origin was primarily economic. It was the economic inferiority of the colonies to England, an inevitable corollary of the colonial status wherever it occurs, that established its existence. Once established, however, its manifestations immediately took on a psychological cast, and, deep-rooted as they became, maintained an existence of their own, as we have pointed out, even after the original political and economic conditions had altered. Only at the close of the century, when the whole psychology of the nation changed with its newly growing economic superiority, did its hold weaken. To study the colonial complex, thus, as an economic outgrowth alone, or a psychological force alone, would be to misunderstand its nature and influence. It is an evolution of both—a psycho-economic reality.

Nationalistic consciousness, in its modern form, has arisen out of the philosophy of individualism and its application to political life. The rise of modern nations occurred as a result of the development of individualistic enterprise, and the psychological growth of nationalism was closely connected with the individualistic way of existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first signs of real Americanness in our literature—finding expression in such writers as Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, and Walt Whitman, who was a product of the frontier tradition even though his life was not spent in a frontier environment—sprang up on the frontier where individualism secured its most wide-spread lease of life. Individualism in the East was far more of a class philosophy than a mass philosophy. Bound by the same ideals of its middle-class forebears in England, and other European countries, the East found greater difficulty in escaping the colonial complex than the West, which represented an environment unknown to any European country. The frontier changed individualism from a class doctrine into a mass phenomenon. It gave democracy a mass meaning which the European tradition had never communicated to it, and which the East, above as well as below the Mason and Dixon Line, had fought rather than encouraged in action.

While the frontier provided the first source of real Americanness in our literature, it was the accumulative growth of power of the nation as a whole which made it possible for it to be capitalized into a nationalistic tradition. It was the change of psychology which came with this new status, influencing the East as well as the West, and remaking the national mind of the country as a whole, that suddenly came to look upon Whitman and Twain as native geniuses instead of as isolated eccentrics. Although no precise date can be established as to when this change occurred, we can conveniently say that at the close of the Spanish-American War it had attained definite focus. Throughout the nineteenth century America had been a second-rate power. After its victory over Spain in 1898, with its consequent acquisition of foreign colonies and an imperialist psychology which went with such acquisition, America for the first time became a major power, ranking with the leading European nations in influence. The impact of that change was almost immediate. It gave form to what before had been so uncertain and chaotic. The psychology which in the nineteenth century had sought to become nationalistic by verbal assertion found itself so changed in the twentieth century that it could become nationalistic without justification or defense. Although American authors throughout the nineteenth century had argued for our cultural emancipation from England, the nation as a whole, particularly in its economic life, had never questioned British hegemony in the international scheme of control. Our earlier conflicts with England had always been the struggles of a small power against a greater. In the political sphere we had never ceased to look up to England as a guiding force in world affairs. Even our intellectuals, notwithstanding their literary chauvinisms, had never learned to discount English opinion or feel themselves independent of English criticism. After all, however much our Bryants and Poes and Lowells argued for the need for a native literature, it could not be denied that England was the leading country in the world at the time, and that its literature had a standing that ours lacked—and American authors were less loath to disregard that advantage and influence than their words might often have indicated.

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Once the American nation became a force in itself, equal to that of European nations, and respected as such an equal, it did not have to turn to England for its psychological identity. It was not long after these changes that American authors came to realize that American literature could stand by itself, on its own legs as it were, and literary success, critical as well as commercial, came to be thought of in connection with America alone. The influence of Whitman upon our poetry was one of its most striking manifestations. Whatever else might be said of our poetry in the last generation, the influence of Whitman upon it cannot be gainsaid. Nor can its genuine Americanness as contrasted with the lack of Americanness in the poetry of Bryant, Longfellow, Halleck, be denied either. Carl Sandburg, Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters, Robert Frost, Robinson Jeffers, Hart Crane, are American poets first of all. They are unequivocally American. No one would ever speak of them in terms of English prototypes. The "Spoon River Anthology," like "The Deserted Village," deals with the decay of village life, but the philosophies of the two poems are as disparate as their themes are similar. Masters's poem is as unmistakably American as Goldsmith's is English. An American Masters of the nineteenth century would have described the inhabitants of Spoon River in a vein much closer to the tradition of Goldsmith, Crabbe, and Clare than to that which actually found expression in the "Spoon River Anthology" itself. Turning from poetry to prose, Anderson's "Winesburg, Ohio" and Lewis's "Main Street" are as authentically American as Sandburg's "Smoke and Steel" and Lindsay's "Congo." In the drama a national awareness also reached a point of stirring fulfilment. Eugene O'Neill represented that fulfilment in its most challenging form. There is no return to English drama for inspiration in the plays of Eugene O'Neill—any more than in those of the younger contemporary school, circling about Paul Green, Sydney Howard, Philip Barry, and Lynn Riggs.

The selection of Sinclair Lewis as a Nobel prize winner marked a further if not final release from the last, lingering traces of our colonial complex. At length Europe, which had steadily sneered at American literature in the past, gave one of our writers international recognition. But the gesture was more than the recognition of an individual writer. It was also the recognition of a literature—for Sinclair Lewis, when all is said, is the most American of American writers. Lewis has revealed America as it had never been revealed in the nineteenth-century literature. Babbitt is an American type, a "hundred-per-cent American." Zenith is and only could be an American town. Elmer Gantry could only be an American. Even the style of Lewis's satires could only be American. And it was this very Americanness which in large part won the prize for Lewis.

The environment in which our colonial complex was born and nurtured is now dead—as also is the environment that nurtured our Victorian outlook upon life which made our literature, as Gertrude Atherton once said, "as correct as Sunday clothes and as innocuous as sterilized milk." The attitude of inferiority has already begun to lose its grip upon the writers of this generation. The problems that face our writers to-day are American problems and not English ones. Not American problems in a nationalistic sense, for American writers of to-day in their rediscovery of America are far from patriotic in their outlook. On the contrary, they are much more critical of the country in which they live than most of their predecessors ever were. They insist upon seeing America as it really is and not as they were taught to believe it is. Certainly no one could call "One Hundred and Twenty Million," "Jews Without Money," "Manhattan Transfer," "Forty-second Parallel," "The Company," "Look Homeward, Angel," "Daughter of Earth," or "Lumber" patriotic novels—and yet they are, all of them, American to the core. Little if anything of the English tradition lives in them. They have sprung out of the American environment as expressions of our life in its most raw and naked form. They are international instead of national in their implications, and yet they are as obviously a product of their native environment as is chewing-gum or the skyscraper. The problems that these writers have to confront are problems connected with the class structure of our society, the economic set-up of our life; problems which spring out of the need to interpret a country which has never been interpreted genuinely and truthfully in the past. It is to the fulfilment of that end that the work of John Dos Passos, Michael Gold, Thomas Wolfe, Edwin Seaver, Charles Yale Harrison, Agnes Smedley, Louis Colman, and a score of younger writers is already dedicated.

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Solid Ground

A STORY

By Louise Saunders

THE two chandeliers glittered, hanging dumbly from the ceiling. They were masses of clustered crystals, glittering. Below, there were shaded lights, rose and cream-colored. Everything was distinct, in sharp outline. Every movement made by the people in the room was too noticeable. Mr. Morrison reaching stealthily for a match to light his cigarette; Mrs. Curtis pleating the folds of her green dress on her knee; Miss Whitford slowly turning an emerald and diamond ring around and around the little finger of her left hand.

This is no way to listen to poetry, thought Florence. If there is anything in what they are reading, it's just lost on us. Poetry, drooping, sinking down beneath a glare of light—but I don't know anything about it. Damn! When will this be over?

Miss Mackracken, with a black-and-gold shawl over her shoulders, was reading one of her own poems about nature. Nature, the big-hearted mother, the eternal comforter! Whenever Miss Mackracken felt lonely or unhappy, when the world had treated her badly, she had but to throw herself down on some hilltop, under spreading trees, to find peace. The little insects whispered comfort to her; the birds, flying overhead, told her not to mind; the warm, brown earth embraced her and assured her silently that it understood. Nature, the great solace, the everlasting friend! Old Mother Nature, in cap and apron, removing Miss Mackracken's glasses and wiping away her tears!

"Beautiful!" some one exclaimed fervently, above the scattered applause.

And now something in lighter vein. Miss Mackracken was a little child, a child who spoke through pursed lips with a marked impediment in its speech. "I'se dot a 'ittle woolly lamb." God showed a marked interest in the woolly lamb. He drew it up to heaven every night to gambol among the stars.

> " 'But I know a secret,' the child says archly.
> 'Dat makes one.
> Lamb knows a secret
> Dat makes anozzer one.
> If you guess it, then there'll be three!
> Though he loves to prance and run
> Wif the stars when day is done,
> Best of all, my lamb loves me.
> Best of all
> Jest a small
> Not so tall
> Little girl whose name is *me!*' "

Florence could see that her father was delighted with that one. Everybody was. They laughed and turned to one another. "Didn't you love it?" A wide-eyed little girl in a daisy field, holding a woolly lamb by the tail.

"Please read it again," some one murmured, in a shy, constrained voice from the rear. Miss Mackracken didn't notice, but that had given them all an idea and the bolder ones repeated: "Please, Miss Mackracken, we must have that again." So Miss Mackracken read it again, popping out the word *me* into a little squeak as before, then breaking into a short, bright smile afterward to indicate that this was not to be taken seriously. It was just an amusing little thing, that she had tossed off.

Poor father is so pleased that one came along that he didn't have to pretend to enjoy. He and I are such Philistines. We are out of place here. It's hard on mother. We are rather like a couple of Esquimaux watching a game of tennis. We are respectful but bewildered. Lord, what a relief a game of tennis would be! Well, I guess that's about all from Miss Mackracken, Florence decided, as she reached for a cigarette.

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With a feeling of pride she watched her mother spring to her feet to announce the next poet, Clarence Brackett Dodge.

Mother is having the time of her life. It's wonderful to see her so happy. She is shaped like a goddess. Hebe, full-breasted, with blown dark hair, striding over the hills. She is strong as an ox. I believe that she could lift father with one hand. And Florence had a fleeting mental picture of her father, with his worried look and his eyeglasses, sitting obediently on her mother's big outstretched hand.

"It is needless for me to thank Miss Mackracken for the exquisite pleasure that she has given us tonight," said Florence's mother. "She must have known from our happy faces what exquisite pleasure we were deriving from her charming poems. You all, of course, have read her book, 'These Bursting Bubbles.'" She held it up for them all to see. "But we shall, I am sure, read it again with added pleasure, after hearing that exquisite verse given to us in such a charming way by the author herself. I feel that you all agree with me that the mantle of Milne has fallen on Mary Smith Mackracken!"

Is Milne through with his mantle? Florence wondered. Perhaps he had two of them.

"And now I have a treat for you! You all, of course, are familiar with the work of our distinguished guest, Clarence Brackett Dodge. His exquisite translations of the songs of the Hopi Indians are known to us all. His recent book, 'The Jester's Hump'"—she selected "The Jester's Hump" from the books on the table and held it up—"has been so widely acclaimed that it is needless for me to say anything about it. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Mr. Clarence Brackett Dodge!"

Mother is perfectly swell! thought Florence. She ought to be reading some of her own poems to them. That one about the thundering wings of time I'll bet is as good as any that we heard. It's too bad that she has so little time for creative work. "It's simply impossible to do any creative work when one has two children." Children? Well, Jimmie, of course, keeps her back, but me—I'm not a child. It's funny too that she hasn't a little more time now that I have taken on the running of the house and everything. Creative work must be the devil!

Clarence Brackett Dodge, who had been sitting, bearded, solemn and motionless, in a chair behind the sofa, came to life. He stood up and after a moment of contemplation spoke in a thin, high voice. That was curious. It seemed to Florence that any voice, coming through a dark-brown beard, ought to be transformed into something rich and—and strange.

Mr. Dodge began by saying that he felt himself to be something of an anticlimax. For any man to follow a charming woman was difficult, but to have to read his own after the delicate and elusive poetry of Mary Smith Mackracken was a handicap that it was going to be very hard to overcome. However, he would do his best.

"I am going to read to you first some of my translations of the hokku of Japan. The hokku are the very distilled essence of poetry. It is impossible to give in translation their charm and elusive quality. The metrical form of the hokku is a very difficult and complicated one. I have not attempted to adhere closely to this form as the English words do not lend themselves so readily to this treatment as do the Japanese. However, I have tried to indicate the intense feeling and the compressed beauty of thought in these marvellous poems."

He turned over the pages of a slim book in his hand, thoughtfully pressed them down and cleared his throat.

"On a lily pad a frog croaks the whole night through
And I, silent, in my little hut
Wish I were a frog."

There was an awed silence for a moment. People shifted slightly in their chairs. Then came a burst of loud applause. Florence glanced at her father. He was applauding too and he looked very serious.

Suddenly Florence had to bite her lips. She heard herself making strange little gasps and half-audible noises as if she were trying not to cry. On her face was a look of staring agony.

God, what shall I do? I shall laugh in a minute. It would kill mother if I did. I must put my mind on something else. I must think of something else quickly. And she thought:

"Through the mud, the polliwog wiggles the whole night through
And I, motionless, on my pedestal,
Wish I were a polliwog."

She gave a strangled gasp which she turned, just in time, into a cough. Several people turned to look at her. But they think it was just a cough, she thought, relieved. By George, they must think it is whooping cough!

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Clarence Brackett Dodge read a great many more Japanese poems one after the other, with only a short pause between, and Florence listened to them calmly. She found to her relief that it was only the first hokku that did for her. She got used to them. Even Clarence Brackett Dodge's own poems were in the hokku manner. Florence wondered, as one who is simply incapable of judgment in such matters, if they were quite as good as the translations. They didn't seem so to her, but then—mother adores them. Her eyes are brilliant. She looks grand in that orange dress with her black hair falling below her ears.

And then a strange thought came to her. It was that they were all so extraordinarily safe—so safe and secure in that lighted room with its rugs and upholstered chairs and people in evening dress listening after dinner to brief poems about falling leaves and sunsets and bullrushes. Art was there with them, as snug and warm as the rest, making word pictures about nature. Nature itself stood outside the windows, silently ready to be interpreted by art. Gentle nature, who sends down rain for our rose bushes and even electricity for our motor cars, who changes the seasons, slowly and beautifully, for our enjoyment.

Yes, this was the very top rung of safety. They were safe, protected—stuffy. No, not that. Poetry couldn't be stuffy, not good poetry, and this must be good, because mother likes it. Mother knows best, little daughter, mother knows best. Oh, hell!

Mother, smiling, arching her thick, black eyebrows, bidding everybody good-by. She was so full of vitality that she almost bounced when she walked, as if there were springs on the soles of her feet. Hebe, with square, straight shoulders. Father, small, gray-haired, tired, shaking hands here and there and saying: "It was a great pleasure to have you. Don't thank me. My wife was responsible for this. She is the only artist in the house."

Clarence Brackett Dodge was staying with them. So was Mary Smith Mackracken. She had put Mackracken in a room with a view of the sea and Dodge in one that overlooked the garden. Perhaps, judging by the poems, it would have been better the other way. Mackracken seemed to be all for gardens, and Dodge had read one about the sea breathing to him of its heavy intermittent love.

This evening, I should say, is about over for me.

She went up to her mother. Her mother was talking to Dodge about James Joyce and how much he meant to her. She turned brightly to Florence and said: "Well, darling, did you enjoy it?"

"It was a little over my head, but I managed to struggle along."

"I'm afraid that young people like you, Miss Florence, only find us poets a bore," Dodge said. Miss Florence! That was a little more than she could bear. She would call him Mr. Clarence some time and see how he liked it—except that he probably would like it. "No, we don't—at least I don't. Good night."

"Dear child, you are not going up so soon!" mother exclaimed.

"Yes, if you don't mind. I am one of those strange people who need their twelve hours of sleep." But would one need any sleep at all if one were as keen about watching the stars and loving James Joyce and bothered by the thundering wings of time as mother was? All that and named Yolanda too! People named Yolanda didn't sleep. They had wide, black eyes always open under arched eyebrows. Yolanda, on the veranda, loves to meander, singing the whole night through.

"She really does like to sleep," said mother. "Isn't it funny? I hate it. Night is the only time when I feel free to do the things I like. It's the only time for creative work. Sometimes I wish that I were a Russian and could sit all night over a table drinking vodka and discussing things."

"I too am interested in Russia," Mr. Dodge said. "A friend of mine has just come from there. He says that they are a great people, struggling in the throes of a mighty experiment." He shook his head and looked down into the glass in his hand.

Miss Mackracken, in her flat, seamy voice ventured to say that the Russians were "taking all the beauty, all the color out of life—everything, in short, that makes life worth living."

"Ah, no," protested mother, with enthusiasm, joyfully scenting an argument. "They are splendid. How happy I would be if I could put my strength with theirs. I would love to be one of them." Mother sees herself dashing along in a troika throwing things to the wolves.

"But," Miss Mackracken complained fretfully, they are so material."

"Material!" Mother was soaring again. "How could they be material in that gorgeous country with

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its vast open spaces, its long winters and vast stretches of snow? I adore winter. Though I was born in New York, Mr. Dodge, I feel that I am really a true daughter of the north."

Mother in the north, peering out of her little bit of an igloo. Oh, what fun!

"I like summer best," father said. "There is less to be done in the office."

Miss Mackracken preferred the autumn, the smell of rotting apples and the bittersweet and woodbine climbing in a riot of scarlet over the walls.

They have left nothing but spring for Mr. Dodge. Well, he'll probably be able to get along with that. "Good night," she said.

"Good night, Miss Florence. Pleasant dreams."

"Thank you. I never remember them so it doesn't matter." She ought to tell them how marvellous they were, but somehow it was so impossible to say things like that. Instead she leaned over her father's chair and kissed the top of his head.

As she went up the stairs she could hear that the conversation had turned to dreams—why we didn't remember them—the subconscious. I did that all by myself. Something accomplished, something done, shall earn a night's repose.

But this night Florence couldn't sleep. Long after she had heard the others close their doors, after the sounds made by Mary Smith Mackracken, the slight coughs and the walking to and fro during her preparation for the night had ceased and the tiny yellow line over the top of the door leading to her room had gone dark, Florence lay awake.

She did not want to sleep, for sleep is only good when it comes at the end of spent energy, when it is a dipping down into the dark flood of forgetfulness after a period of vigor and awareness. Then it is a renewal; then it is good. But she felt sickeningly stale, mouldy. To sleep now would be to set a seal on that staleness and bottle it up within her. The dark room, her dressing-table, the bed, the curtains—they were so still, so dead, so safe. There is no good in safety unless one comes back to it after danger.

She kicked the sheet vigorously to the bottom of the bed and clutched the pillow around her face. "What in hell is the matter with me? I think I am going crazy!"

For a moment she felt better. Just that convulsive movement, that half laugh, half cry had seemed to cut through the fatty staleness and free her from it. But, like some horrible thick liquid, it sluggishly encompassed her again. She sat up, put her feet to the floor and listened. "Mackracken is asleep all right!"

This feeling of blankness! Shall I stay like this for hours and hours? And when the night is over, what have you? Just another day! Moscow, Moscow! When shall we get to Moscow? I'm going Russian too, like mother.

The windows were two grayish squares with a black cord and tassel, hanging motionless in the middle of each one. She crossed the room and sat down sideways on the window-sill, looked down into the garden. Its paths and indistinct masses of flowers were there for her to look at or not, as she chose, as if it were a picture, prisoned in unchanging dead paint. Take it or leave it. Take this room, its four-post bed, its rugs, its dressing-table, with carved legs, admire it or loathe it or leave it forever. It would stand there just exactly the same, in the same blank silence.

Do I expect the dressing-table to dance for joy if I admire it and weep if I hate it? Do I expect the garden to call out "Hello" to me when I lean out of the window?

Because it was always there, Florence hadn't noticed the soft sound of the sea. Now she raised her head and listened to it. Faint and far away it sounded, yet alive and everlastingly active. Those long, foaming swishes following each other! Long, faint swishes, two short ones, a long one—then a pause and, after it, a long-drawn-out, dragging, sighing one that seemed to come from the depths and brought a series of shorter ones with it.

"Then Alice came upon a little door that certainly she had not noticed before."

Quietly Florence opened the door of her closet and took out a short tweed skirt. She flung her pajamas on the bed and put on the skirt, a flannel blouse and sneakers. She turned the knob of her door, carefully, shut it after her and tiptoed down the dark stairs.

There was a pile of rocks near the house, but Florence didn't stop there. She didn't want to be near the house. Away from it, from the sight of it, from the thought of it, with its kitchen and dining-room and garage and all of those people, mother, the servants and everybody, asleep in their beds!

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She walked on, along the little path that twisted around the rocks on the cliff over the beach. Her heart pounded with excitement. The darkness swirled around her. Sometimes she was in complete darkness and then she had to feel the direction of the path carefully with her foot before taking a step. There was a wind near the shore that swayed the branches of the trees. The trees, blown by the wind, made the same swishing, rustling sound as the sea, but it was more steady. Sometimes a branch drooped across her path or two bushes on either side of it mingled their leaves. And each time that she stooped to go under the branch or parted the bushes she felt exultant and half afraid, as if there might be a wonder or a danger on the other side. On her right the sea dashed below her, night black. She looked up to the left. There were few stars and no mountain. The night had swallowed it.

The path ended in a meadow, a dark stretch of grass sloping steeply upward to a rock dimly outlined against the sky. Beside it stood a pine tree. And because the sky is always luminous she could see that, too. It was a jagged, inky blot beside the rock. There she would go.

The grass in the meadow was long and wet. It brushed coolly against her bare legs, soaked the hem of her skirt. Here the wind was startling, insistent. But she didn't think about it. She would think about it when she reached the rock.

When she stood there, high above the wind-swept sea, above the scarcely visible, faintly burnished waves that poured themselves endlessly against the rocks, with the stretch of space that was the meadow behind her, and at her left hand the swaying creaking pine tree, she felt a sudden exultation!

The wind tore at her. It forced the breath back through her nostrils. It drummed at her ears. Brum, brum—brum-brum, brum, brum-brum—Her skirt whipped back frantically. Her hair streamed and tossed. She could scarcely stand against it. But she stood, with her feet apart and her arms above her head. Joy mounted, mounted in her as she resisted it, the smooth, pouring yet terrific onslaught of the wind. This was real! This was one definite thing acting with all its strength, with all its might against her—sweeping away all little half-hearted attempts, feeble embellishments and decoration. It was one big thing striving against her, stark and mighty!

The sea clashed its cymbals to the drum beats in her ears. It was as if she were the centre of some savage dance and the joy of it mounted to an ecstasy until she was almost lost under it—unconscious!

Suddenly she dropped her arms. She went down flat on her stomach and peered over the cliff. There was, she knew, a tiny beach there, curved between two rough walls of rock.

Slowly, holding to the grass and bushes, and feeling her way warily with her foot, from one ledge of earth or rock to the next below, she lowered herself down until she stood at last on the loose pebbles of the beach.

The wind had left her now. She looked up as if she could see it, still charging on madly overhead. The uncouth outlines of the rock hung over the cliff, dumbly, quietly. But it is still just as wild up there as it was before. It is beating against the pine tree just as it beat against me.

The dark waves rolled in, crashed and ran fluidly up the beach, fingering it. Successively, one after the other, they curled over, crashed, and broke into foamy confusion. The air was wet and salt.

Florence kicked off her sneakers and dropped her skirt and blouse to her feet. There was no wind, but a breeze, light as smoke, drifted over her whole body, lifted her hair. Slowly she waded out into the icy-cold, tossing water.

She stood still. The water swirled around her waist, suddenly slapped and drenched her shoulders, dropped to her waist again, restlessly moving. Now that she was beyond the shelter of the rocks the wind poured over her again. She didn't want to swim. She wanted to know what the sea would do to her.

She waded farther until she was submerged to her armpits. At this moment the water around her was almost smooth—tense, as if waiting. Then she looked up and saw a tall wave, edged with white, solidly, relentlessly bearing down on her! She felt a quick fear. Should she dive through it and escape? No, let it do its worst.

For a fraction of a second it towered over her head, curved, menacing, shutting out the sky. She was tossed down, under its impact, like a log.

Down, down into absolute darkness. Unresisting, under the dark water, her naked body was violently dealt with—curled and straightened and

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twisted and drawn down, and around and down. Before her open eyes there was nothing, complete annihilation of light, blackness. She was no more than a log or a piece of metal, than any mindless, dead thing.

Finally her limp fingers brushed the sand of the bottom. She dragged herself to her feet. Exhausted, she waded back and flung herself down on the hard pebbles. She couldn't move.

There had been a great wonder. She had braced herself, used all her strength to meet it. There had been another kind of wonder and she had sunk down under it, submissive. There could be nothing more.

But it was the last one that had done for her. That terrible moment of submission, before the wave broke and under the water, when she had stood in the way of a tremendous impersonal force and had deliberately refused to assert herself against it: that moment when she had disappeared from herself and her mind had gone suddenly dark, had broken something in her. She would never be the same again. The artificial structure that she had built around her for protection had caved inward and left her vulnerable. Her carefully built up admiration for her mother had caved in with it. She had never admired her really. She despised her. Everything was different.

"Damn, damn," she sobbed, "I wish I hadn't done it."

Wearily and without getting up, she pulled her clothes to her and put them on. Her skirt was wet and heavy with sand. With both hands she tried to squeeze the water out of her dripping hair. "I seem to have brought about half the Atlantic out with me."

Now the moon showed, faintly silver, behind a line of sliding, black cloud. The sea gleamed glaucously in response, then went dark, as a thicker cloud obscured the moon. She waited a long time for it to appear again, with her hands around her knees. Once a rim of light outlined a huge bank of cloud and she watched it until it disappeared.

At last she rose to her feet and faced the sea. She felt secure as if some one had put into her hands a weapon to defend herself in dangerous places.

"Even if I had the choice I wouldn't go back again to the way I was before, not for anything. Now, at least, I am free. Now I can see where I am going."

GOSSIP

(1585 A.D.)

By Mildred Plew Merryman

Good-morrow, neighbor! Hast thou heard the prate?
Some wags at Charlecot have slain a deer;
They've found young Shackspeare's lanthorn by the gate—
Sir Lucy's in a proper wax, I hear!
Aye, that's what comes of dallying with skites
And drumbling after player folk in pubs;
Young Will, they say, would tarry on o' nights
And tipple were the glass Beelzebub's.
Ah, wellaway! He'll set no worlds agape!
And now he's skipped—gone Londonward— Poor Will!
That trollops' town will take him by the nape
And snuff him like a rushlight on a sill.

I'faith, ten shillings to a groat, I'll bet
The merry whoreson rides a gibbet yet!

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The Best People

By Edmund Wilson

Are the "best people" really important? Mr. Cartwright is an example. He has social and business standing. He and his circle consider themselves the substantial citizens of the country. Do they really know what they are doing; what are their standards?

Mr. Cartwright is, let us say, the agent for a textile mill and he is one of the best people. He is decent, amiable, well pressed and well polished. He lends distinction to country-club society. Though his satisfactions are more bound up than he realizes with tangible things that money can buy him, he never spends money ostentatiously; and he has a conscience about civic affairs, giving to charitable causes and being opposed to political corruption, especially as practised by crude politicians who have never been to college. His wife feels this even more strongly: she was opposed to Al Smith in the White House on the ground of his dreadful commonness. She dresses extremely well and usually notices in a Pullman car that she is the only really smart woman there. Mr. Cartwright plays a pretty good game of something—probably tennis or golf. He collects first editions or etchings—or perhaps even has a taste for pictures or reading. He gets his liquor from the same bootlegger who serves the *very* rich people, but he never drinks to excess.

Yet Mr. Cartwright's conviction of importance has really very little basis in fact. He seems important in his official rôle at the mill; but he is in reality as helpless there, he occupies as cramped a position between the upper and nether millstones of society, as any hard-boiled superintendent for an impoverished coal company who has to short-weight the miners at the tipple. If Mr. Cartwright's own company cuts wages, Mr. Cartwright has to put the cut into effect. If the union protests, he has to tell them that he is "not in a position to make any promises or recommendations"—even though he may be sympathetic. And precisely because he can make no promises or recommendations, Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright's culture and distinction, all that they value as making their social position, have no solid or durable value at all. Such pretensions can only be valid on the part of a governing class. And Mr. Cartwright does not govern. He gets his orders from officials higher up, and they may get their orders from bankers from whom they borrow. Yet neither bankers nor higher officials constitute a governing class: they are merely people of all sorts of origins, capacities and ideas who come and go in lucrative positions. The system they belong to governs, but they are only individuals on the make. They take no collective responsibility and their power is not hereditary—so they have none of the special training which may dignify, discipline and refine a strongly established owning class.

Yet Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright are firmly convinced of their superiority. Let us see what this superiority consists of. If Mr. Cartwright derives from some family who have already been property-holders for a generation or two during the simpler days of the Republic, he will attach himself to the memory of family habits as if they *were* in fact the characteristics of such a strongly established class—a high civilization against whose standards the present era is merely a transitory outbreak. If Mr. Cartwright is a Southerner, he will like to talk about the Civil War, will cherish family photographs of the Civil War generation, will dream of retiring from industry altogether and going to live in the country, where he can keep hunting-dogs and raise race-horses. If he is a Bostonian, he may still live in a family house, solid and square but rather bleak and Spartan in the taste of his fathers who built it, and decorated with copies of paintings and old brown photographs of Italy brought back by his mother from abroad. If he is a New Yorker or a Philadelphian, the glamour of his ancestral memories will shine from an expen-

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sive social life, polo and yachting, brandy and champagne and historical research or civic reform. If, on the other hand, he is a Middle Westerner, he will have the pride of affluence hard-won, of virtue and distinction stoutly maintained, amidst the hardships of the wilderness. If he is Californian, he will look back to the days when food and drink were so plentiful and cheap, when people were so frank-spoken and gay, when life was so easy and free. In any case, he will respect his college as the stronghold of good-fellowship and learning, guard his club as the temple of manners and honor, and scrupulously observe in his domestic and business relations the old-fashioned rules of integrity among equals.

This is his morality and thus he manages part of the time at least to live in a world which does not really exist, which has never except briefly and locally existed. The real conditions of Mr. Cartwright's life are being determined by quite other public standards, which have been crowding or modifying his private ones more and more every day. For the society that Mr. Cartwright lives in is not a society of planters or ranchers or pioneers nor of provincial importers and exporters not far removed from pioneering; it is an enormous machine for money-making and exploitation which has long ago rendered impossible the advantages enjoyed by these more or less independent communities. The planters have gone down before the industrialists; the capitalists have captured the farmers and ranchers. And the business class, cut off from Europe, with no deep-rooted tradition to sustain it, soon lost what little it had of sound conservatism—the discipline and culture of a slowly built-up social structure, of firmly established institutions, which has kept the European nations standing in spite of the fact that capitalism in Europe is further advanced in decay than among us. In America, by the years after the War, life had become merely a stampede to make and sell things—the question wasn't whether people needed or wanted them but whether by any means they could be induced to buy them. Hence advertising—one of the most fantastic features of capitalistic society. Advertising, as we have it in America, is a sheer waste of money and brains: but if you allow competitive business for private profit, you have to have a whole corps of poets, artists, preachers, blackmailers and flatterers to compete in selling the products. It is a formidable undertaking to persuade people to invest at high prices in a great variety of valueless breakfast foods and tooth-pastes; in all sorts of things which they would not normally think of wanting. And even when the article is both good and necessary, it, too, has to have its ballyhoo to outshout the other articles of the same kind. And the cumulative result of all this publicity is that the Americans have come generally to accept an ideal of personal glory and merit based solely on the possession of things: cars, clothes, electrical appliances, with, transcending them, a patriotic ideal of America as a great market.

The Americans were eager for self-improvement, and the people who had to get rid of the manufacturer's goods for him realized that they could exploit this desire. And as the Americans had also kept a considerable remnant of the feeling of social inferiority of a recently revolted middle class, the advertisement writers and the salesmen saw that they could play on this, too. The mass production of "exclusiveness" became a major racket—with great damage to our comprehension of realities. American society, in the technical sense, is largely bourgeois: since the fall of the Southern planters, we have had no such thing as a true aristocracy—that is, a privileged class of hereditary property-owners. "Middle class" and "aristocratic," no longer derived from social actualities, are now only descriptive adjectives like "rude" or "polite" indicating such clumsy manners or such sordid and narrow ideas as people get from too close application to business or such ease and wider range, on the other hand, as they get from security and leisure. We use them a good deal in this sense; but the truth is that security and leisure have been coming and going so quickly in America with the coming and going of the money which makes them possible that we have never had anything other than a bourgeoisie which, though you can find in it many varieties of education and sophistication, is fundamentally homogeneous. Our society, within this bourgeoisie and its sphere of influence among the working people, is so far democratic, and its future will certainly be more democratic still.

Yet the effect of capitalist advertising has been not only to persuade people that owning things provides the last satisfaction of the spirit but also

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to mislead them with delusions of aristocratic distinction to be obtained in the same way. You have the cigarettes which are supposed to identify you as a "person of culture and refinement," the apartment hotel which, though as yet uncompleted, will certify the tenants as social successes, the restaurants with "aristocratic" head waiters who consent to shed a little glamor on the patrons by allowing them to be waited on, the steamship lines which apparently, if you sail on them, equip you with a monocle, a slender figure and an arrogant knife-like profile, and the department store which is ready to convert a whole city of bourgeois women into snobs by selling them all copies of Chanel gowns and which tries to popularize silk hats as "a delightful piece of swank." You have superiority sold in cans and packages and with the enamel on mechanical ice-boxes and the paint on motor-cars until every suburban community of brokers, every resort full of idle investors, every group of Tammany grafters and their wives, every "residential street" of well-off village storekeepers, every white-collar set of bridge-players in a mill town are convinced, like Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright, that they are consecrated to the guardianship of certain inestimable values which make its existence a benefit or ornament to the community and which justify the sacrifice of other groups to its interest.

And Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright themselves, who think themselves better than all these other kinds of people, end by being "sold" like everybody else. Mr. Cartwright's textile company, for example, will find the market for ordinary sheets and towels glutted and it will call upon its sales department to invent some way of stimulating a new demand. The sales department will propose making colored sheets and towels to harmonize with the colors of people's rooms; and Mr. Cartwright will find himself involved in the production of green, pink, purple, yellow and blue sheets and towels and in the excitation of an unnatural appetite for them through mendacious and hypnotic methods which disfigure the rural roadsides, interrupt stories in the magazines and bewilder people's attention with jumpy signs in public places. If he wants his daughters to go to dances at the country club, if he wants to send his sons to old Harvard or Princeton or Yale, he has got to turn out green and purple towels. If he is the agent for a bath-room-fixture company, he will have to turn out green and purple bath-tubs. If he is the agent in a paper-mill, he will have to turn out green and purple toilet-paper. And he will be obliged to view with complaisance the publication of absurd and revolting advertisements threatening the reader with horrible diseases and immediate loss of social prestige unless he uses this particular kind. And poor Mr. Cartwright, who has begun by trying to impose on the simple-minded in order to get the means of remaining superior to them, will end by becoming simple-minded himself. He and his wife will become more and more like the men and women in the advertisements, more and more insipid, fatuously cheerful, two-dimensional, spick and span—more and more identified with smart cars, clean shaves, exclusive face lotions, unrippable stockings and Louis Quatorze radio sets. They will own all the things people are supposed to own; and Mr. Cartwright will fall a victim to his own blackmail: the Cartwrights will put in green and purple toilet-paper. And without knowing it, they will have become partly dependent on their patronage of this article of luxury for their assurance of superiority. They will, in short, finally have arrived at the position of being patronized by the imperial paper itself.

I have said that Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright end by becoming as simple-minded as the people at whom the advertisements of Mr. Cartwright's company are aimed. But the truth is that it is almost impossible for human beings to attain the two-dimensional simple-mindedness of the ideal in the advertisements; and insofar as he falls short of attaining it, Mr. Cartwright can only feel uncomfortable. He may never admit it even to himself, but there doesn't seem to be much point to his activities. If he is serious-minded, as I have imagined him, he cannot but feel the lack of harmony between what he believes to be his principles and ideals and the kind of life he is taking part in. If he tends to have an inquiring mind and to be interested in ideas, he has been finding more and more that the life of ideas is confined to what you read in books and that there is a taboo on inquiring in conversation what is actually going on in the world. The trouble is that, without his being aware of it, capitalist business has come to play for his own generation exactly the rôle that religion did for the generation of his grandfathers: it is something that simply must not be discussed. Private enterprise and private profit have taken the place of the Book of Genesis and the Divinity of Christ—

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with the Soviets in the rôle of Darwin, Huxley, Robert Ingersoll, Renan and Strauss. The newspapers won't deal with the matter; even the philosophers try to get around it; and if you introduce it into conversation, you are guilty of an act of bad taste like making jokes about the Scriptures to your great-aunt. And the result is that, though by the time the world is delivered of the new order with which it is now in labor most of Mr. Cartwright's present assumptions will have been knocked sky-high, Mr. Cartwright's ideas remain dim as to what it is all about. He believes he is free-minded and free-speaking; but really he lends himself to a general conspiracy not to mention, not to recognize, certain facts. He has tried to be satisfied with making money and owning things; but now he can't even make money and it's not permitted seriously to ask what is wrong.

If, on the other hand, Mr. Cartwright is gay and likes people who drink and are intelligent and amusing, they will talk about the things they drink, about the new tunes of Cole Porter and Gershwin, about the pictures in *The New Yorker* and the imbecilities in the Americana of *The Mercury,* about the novels of Louis Bromfield and the plays of Philip Barry. They will make jokes about Lesbians and fairies; meet each other in France in the summer; furnish their apartments and houses with silver-glass tulips and chairs on bent pipes. They will suffer from unreciprocated love; they will go abroad to get away or get nearer; they will live for years with unfaithful mates, and their friends will know that liquor, travel and entertaining make but a sorry consolation for their anguish. And they will try to find in sterile love affairs which involve no social or moral responsibility, which at best can only feed in the imagination an ideal of desperate pleasure, the passion and the romance which the world seems no longer to hold. The women, with good brains and independent wills, still cling to the privileges and comforts which they have been brought up as ladies to enjoy and will be neither conventional wives and mothers nor independent economic producers. The men, their skill, their energy and their intelligence exploited by the capitalistic enterprises out of which they can get nothing but money for luxuries, have lost the force of male authority. Or provided with money they do not work for and with no relation to its source that seems real, though they may start out with exceptional abilities they have not even use to keep them bright and can only try to find their way back into life through sport or snobbery or debauchery or art till, baffled at last by their own idleness and dulness, they end as hypochondriacs who can do nothing but nurse themselves, or as tuberculars or alcoholics.

A good many kill themselves. The machine is running down and it no longer carries us along with its momentum. We exhaust the pleasures, the emotions, the excitements, of a life which aims at nothing beyond itself, which is a part of no general human effort; and we decide to quit out of sheer futility. Or we suddenly find ourselves without the money which has in the past been the only end of our activity. Brokers find their occupation gone and don't know now what to do with themselves. Bankers find that they have caused to evaporate the savings of hundreds of depositors and that they are now not only poor men but swindlers when they had only been trying to play the game. Artists who have been unsuccessful in serving the capitalist market or unhappy in spite of success find that they haven't originality or self-sufficiency enough to pursue lines of their own under conditions which make individual revaluations of experience peculiarly difficult, unremunerative and depressing. And to well-off people the lowering of a standard of living which to people less well-off seems luxurious may be as desperate a disaster as the loss to poor people of their very means of subsistence and eviction from their only shelter. An attorney for the Pennsylvania Railroad who had formerly been a millionaire committed suicide last year because he had only $25,000 a year left: he couldn't bear to face the privation.

The people in Mr. Cartwright's world who despair thus and kill themselves are not kept up by any sense of responsibility. They feel no obligation to their society to live: they have simply lost out like gamblers at Monte Carlo. Perhaps the poor have more loyalty to life: when a workman kills himself, the other working people feel ashamed. The working people are like the soldiers in the trenches: they at least have to keep up each other's morale. But the American bourgeoisie to-day feel little individual responsibility—and in fact they haven't any. Capitalistic society in America is a vast system for passing the buck. Lincoln Steffens has

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just shown from how many years back nobody in America has been what he pretended to be. The politicians and the government are not the civil servants of a governing class: they are people who have a racket in serving business. And business has become daily more impersonal; the relations between the people who have kept it running have become daily more indirect. And that is the reason that all the business people, no matter how sound or important they seem to be, say such stupid or feeble things when you talk to them. Mr. Cartwright and his inferiors and his superiors will all repeat to you the same catch-phrases and formulas, as if they had neither insight nor power—vague phantoms from the intellectual limbo which lies so deep in the capitalist mind and exists to keep the right hand from knowing what the left hand is up to. You will hear Mr. Cartwright and his associates say that we have got to learn new uses for surplus leisure; that we have got to go back and live as our fathers lived (and presumably, if we are workers out of work, die as our fathers died); that prices are coming down so that money buys more than it did before and that "equilibrium" (a magic word) has got to be established by an "adjustment" (another magic word) of wages—that is, that wages have got to be cut; that the American working-class has been spoiled, that the working people in the European countries have known very well how to get along with hard work and thrift and that the American workers can afford to do without their radios and cars until "business recovers"; that the American Federation of Labor (regarded as a very radical organization) has got to back down and moderate its demands; that taxation of the big industries would cripple them and that the burden must be distributed more evenly; that we must leave relief to voluntary charity, as otherwise it would be eaten up by graft; that the dole has ruined England; that your guess is as good as mine as to what is going to happen now. Or if they are the younger and more sophisticated kind, they will talk about pulling out for a distant island or "enjoying the last twenty-four hours of capitalism"; or they will say that after all the only kind of society is a monarchy; or they will even tell you they have a red flag in the attic.

In any case, they do not talk like people who know what they are doing. The most curious thing of all they say sometimes is that they are waiting for the revolution. Though they assume their own superiority and though they had been teaching the working people up to yesterday their own shibboleths and ideals, they now pass the buck to labor: they expect labor to take the initiative. But under capitalism in America, no class of people is responsible. Not only are all the business men of high and low degree merely out for their own personal fortunes; not only are the politicians merely out to racketeer the business men; but the working class, too, has been counting on big business as on God to give them work and increase their standard of living. They are wholly unprepared to make a revolution. Their radical leaders even in these hard times have still a formidable task before them to destroy the working man's own belief in the business God.

And as for the professional experts, they have either been so long in the pay of the business men that they have come to share the business man's point of view or they hold academic positions so that, however much they may rail at the irresponsibility of the people who manage affairs, they have no responsibility themselves. And as for the professional ideologues, despite their reiterated discontent, they too have been trusting to the capitalist structure which seemed so solid over their heads and which, provided—what was not very difficult—they were able to make themselves a place in it, gave them a feeling of being well taken care of. It also gave them a feeling of impotence in regard to their own ideas. And the result was they would either dilute these ideas or compromise them by verbal sleight-of-hand tricks without being conscious of what they were doing; or they would resign themselves to wait for the new order with a patience scarcely distinguishable from stagnation. Then when the roof of the big mill suddenly caved in and the walls began to totter, too, and they found themselves like any Indian caciques under a blank sky never built for human shelter, they went on living, if they were stolid, like the business men as if nothing had occurred or, if they were more alert, they went scurrying bewilderedly about like bugs uncovered by the lifting of a stone. They too had been passing the buck—to the management which it was their rôle to criticise. And if Mr. Cartwright consults them now, they will not afford him much inspiration. Their own psychology has been too close to his. Unlike the Indian caciques, they have not been running the tribe. And now it turns out that there is nobody running it: it is not run.

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Hoover Can Be Elected

By Henry B. Russell

An editor contends that the historical perspective and other omens do not confirm Washington newsman Elliott Thurston's prediction "Hoover Can Not Be Elected." Mr. Russell began his career, which includes a half century of newspaper experience, with the Springfield Republican *and is now editor of that famous paper's affiliate, the Springfield* Union.

READERS of Mr. Elliott Thurston's article in the January SCRIBNER'S entitled "Hoover Can Not Be Elected" who nevertheless seek consolation or hope, may find it, in some measure at least, in the proverbial carelessness of events for the reputation of prophets and, further, in the fact that Washington correspondents as a rule are keen and accurate observers of national politics in the very worst place in the whole country to observe them, barring possibly our untrodden forests and the bad lands of the West.

The current criteria which he uses in predicting that "Mr. Hoover is done for" may also be accepted without complete despair because of his generous reservations, which include the possibility that a perceptible prosperity may be around the corner or that the Democrats may become embroiled in a Kilkenny-cat affair or that dollar wheat or a new bull market or "other caprices of divine or human nature may suddenly clear the political skies." To this spacious range of possibilities might be added the normal probability of the later occurrence of the unexpected when forecasting ten months ahead.

It is quite true that the public in 1928 had exaggerated expectations of Mr. Hoover's ability to achieve as President as he had formerly achieved in tasks over which he had complete executive control. It was a plainly erroneous assumption that, in any event, he could be as effective as a President of constitutionally limited powers and subject to the delays or political hostility of at least one branch of Congress; and especially in dealing with world-wide economic conditions over which no agency, not even a dictator as capable as Mussolini, could have control and concerning which expert opinions have clashed while public confidence waned.

It is true enough also that in his campaign utterances and in later statements Mr. Hoover too confidently assumed the continuance and expansion of a mounting prosperity. But who in 1928 or in any year up to the final months of 1929 did not make the same assumption with equal confidence? It would be exceedingly difficult to discover a banker or an industrialist or an economist or a merchant or a worker in any trade or profession, or even a Washington correspondent, who did not then have the same mistaken confidence in uninterrupted prosperity. Mr. Hoover is now blamed by many for failing to foresee that which they themselves did not anticipate. Presidents are not chosen to be clairvoyants for the country, but to take things as they come, including the slings and arrows of outrageous fate.

Assuming that Mr. Hoover is so much abler than his present critics that he could have foreseen that to which they were blind, had he given a warning of an impending economic crisis and thereby injected a note of pessimism and distrust into the general exuberance of the first part of 1929, the scornful criticism that would have been heaped upon him by those now blaming him for an overconfidence which was theirs may be imagined. In that case he would have been blamed for bringing on a debacle by throwing a monkeywrench into the overworked optimism of the plunging public. Never has the White House held a prophet of evil in piping times of plenty. Indeed, in such periods prophets of evil need, like Elijah, to take to the woods.

Only in colorless times do American Presidents escape torrential shafts of criticism and censure. If it is a fault of the American people to cudgel their Presidents in office, they gloriously make up for it in respect and honor after they have passed from

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office or from life. Our greatest monuments have been reared to those Presidents most sorely beset by contemporary criticism and blame. President Washington bitterly complained that he should be "accused of being the enemy of one nation and subject to the influence of another, and, to prove it, that every act of my administration should be tortured and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them be made by giving one side only of a subject, and that, too, in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter or even to a common pickpocket." Nevertheless, he was re-elected and that monumental shaft in Washington is the impressive answer of a later generation.

Were Mr. Hoover the only President in our history against whom a severely critical and even hostile public opinion raged ten months before election there might be little occasion to challenge the easy conclusion that he is done for. But in this respect, whether he may be entitled to it or not, he is in the company of the greatest Presidents. Some of them have been re-elected even when they themselves believed they were done for.

Though our history is an open book, relatively few of the thousands that visit and admire the Lincoln Memorial may be aware of the raging tide of public discontent and party bitterness that beat upon Lincoln ten and even five months before his re-election in 1864. By most of his own party leaders he was regarded as incompetent. He was blamed for the ill-success of the war which had run on until the people of the North became heartsick at the fearful sacrifices that brought no visible achievement. Lincoln was blamed then for failure even more than Hoover is blamed now in a depression that has dragged on with its idle wheels, smokeless chimneys, frozen assets, depleted fortunes, unemployment, deficits and public suffering.

Less than three months before his re-election Lincoln confided to a friend that of all the members of the House of Representatives he could name but one in whose personal and political friendship he could absolutely confide. Greeley and other editors were nagging him. Thad Stevens never missed an opportunity to thrust his keenest invectives against him. New York, which had elected an able Democratic governor, was regarded as lost, and Pennsylvania was trembling in the political balance. A group of discontented Republicans of the self-confessed better-person type had met in convention and nominated Frémont for President. Democratic opinion, of course, was extremely hostile and Democratic political hopes ran high.

Impressed with the gloomy situation that confronted him, Lincoln one day wrote the following memorandum, sealed it in an envelope and had it endorsed by members of his Cabinet, with written instructions that it was not to be opened till after election:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, August 23, 1864.

This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to co-operate with the President-elect so as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration, as he will have secured his election on such grounds that he cannot possibly save it afterwards.

A. LINCOLN.

Three months later Lincoln carried all but three States and gained 90 per cent of the electoral votes, a percentage never since exceeded. Though to some this may seem a mere rehearsal of familiar history, it may serve to remind others of the risks of assuming that, because of public discontent and criticisms of sorely tried Presidents ten months or even three before elections, they are done for. It is quite true that in September Sherman's capture of Atlanta and Sheridan's successful drive in the Shenandoah greatly heartened the people, but Grant had still to win some of the bloodiest battles of the war between the Rapidan and the James.

If it appears presumptuous to bring Civil War days into comparison with an economic depression of to-day, it may be replied that one of the trio of formerly defeated Democratic Presidential candidates at the Jackson Day dinner sought to justify a large federal bond issue on the ground that the existing crisis calls for the financial resources and sacrifices of war times.

In the present case, as in others in our history, the public state of mind as most vocally expressed early in Presidential years may not be at all conclusive of election prospects or of the results, which may depend less on visible evidences of renewing prosperity or on Democratic Kilkenny-cat affairs than on a state of mind that, because less vocal, is not included in the political equation. In politics discontent is always vocal while abiding faith is mum. Under the stormy surface are unruffled depths. "The shallow murmur but the deep are dumb."

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But it is unnecessary to confine comparisons of the present with historic war-times. The Republican revolt against Grant and the consequent fusion of so-called Liberal Republicans with the Democrats for Greeley's candidacy, the revolt of the Silver Republicans against McKinley in 1896 and of the Anti-Imperialists in 1900 may be cited as evidences of deceptive public and party discontent. If, on the one hand, the emotional Bull Moose performance of 1912 under so gallant a political figure as Theodore Roosevelt so divided the Republicans of the country as to elect Mr. Wilson on 41 per cent of the popular vote, on the other, the venture of La-Follette in 1924 served to elect a Republican President on 54 per cent of the popular vote. Could the political disgruntlement now loudly voiced by self-styled progressives in Congress be sufficiently harmonized to be concentrated in a third party this year, the chances that it would serve to re-elect President Hoover would be as good certainly as that it would defeat him.

Legislative experience in recent years has frequently served to reveal that noise does not necessarily imply a multitude. Congress has been quite susceptible to concentrated pressure and propaganda from earnest but small groups claiming, rather than having, large public backing. Ordinarily there is in this country a deeper state of public mind than that which clamors for special nostrums or reeks with political discontent. Such manifestations are too readily assumed at times to be criteria of national sentiment as a whole.

This deeper and usually quite inaudible state of the public mind ordinarily does not reveal itself until a national election. A historical survey indicates that as a rule it is cautiously inclined to avoid the prospect of innovations in our fundamental order or proposed nostrums of a radical nature, whether or not politically designed to capitalize a public discontent. When in 1895 the Democratic Party furiously rebelled against the financial conservatism of President Cleveland to follow the peerless opportunism of Bryan, it lost public confidence and support that have never since been fully regained. Only in 1916, when President Wilson was vainly trying to keep us out of the war and when people in the West thought he was to do it, did a bare majority of the nation rally to his re-election. Furthermore, Wilson was a forceful President with a strong and conservative control of his party and many voters were disinclined in a critical period to "swap horses in the middle of the stream."

A similar public disinclination may prevail as we approach the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November next, even if in seeking to capitalize the depression with radical proposals the Democratic leaders carefully avoid Kilkenny-cat affairs over Prohibition. Those who form conclusions from current talk on the street ten months before election, in disregard of those that are saying little and politicians whose ears to the ground may catch only the noise of the surface, are proverbially subject to disillusions after the voting. As for the keener and usually more conscientiously impartial Washington correspondents, they suffer from the handicap of an environment in which ordinarily the superficialities of political opportunism or expedience are in a state of congestion.

NOTE TO ST. PETER

INTRODUCING MISS MARY ALLEN

By Mary Willis Shuey

QUITE probably she'll call you "Colonel Peter,"
But please don't think her choice of titles quaint,
For in the Bluegrass which has been her Heaven
A Colonel always has outranked a Saint.

You'll find her most proficient in her praises—
She was a maiden aunt, a constant guest,
Who spent her life recounting family glories.
She'll know her place in mansions of the blest.

She'll soon find out the social scale you follow,
And join the Heavenly Host in joyous hymn
When she discovers kinships with archangels,
Or finds she's cousin to the seraphim.

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AS I LIKE IT – *William Lyon Phelps*

On the 22d day of this month of March, 1932, the world will celebrate the centenary of the death of Goethe.

For those who cannot easily read German, let me recommend three books, recently made available in cheap and attractive editions—"Faust," translated by Bayard Taylor; "Wilhelm Meister," translated by Carlyle; "Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann," translated by John Oxenford. Taylor's translation of "Faust" is in the Modern Library; and Eckermann's "Conversations" with Introduction by Havelock Ellis, and "Wilhelm Meister" are in Everyman's Library.

Thus for a small sum, one may own three of the greatest books ever written, filled with the riches of a mind which Lord Haldane called the most spacious mind since Aristotle.

In dealing with Goethe, one is forced to use superlatives. Leaving out scientific and technical works, if we put everything that Goethe wrote in one heap, and everything else in the German language in another heap, the former would be more valuable than the latter. There is no parallel to this in any other literature; for if we had to choose between Shakespeare and all the rest of English literature, we should not choose Shakespeare.

Tennyson wrote in "In Memoriam,"

> I held it truth with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,

referring to Goethe's versatility. Goethe was the greatest poet, dramatist, novelist, critic, song-writer, autobiographer, conversationist, travel-writer, in the whole range of German literature.

A compliment Goethe paid to Kant would be more fittingly applied to himself; when we open any book by Goethe, it is as if we stepped into a brightly lighted room. He illuminated every subject he touched except mathematics. Whether or not it is true that the last words he uttered were *More light!* no words could have been more characteristic.

During the latter part of Goethe's life, his world-supremacy was quite generally recognized, except perhaps in Great Britain. Carlyle's translation of "Meister" (1824) had considerable influence in arousing among English readers an appreciation of Goethe's true position. Carlyle, in his preface to the first edition, remarked

> with scarcely more than one or two exceptions, the best works of Germany have lain neglected, or worse than neglected, and the Germans are yet utterly unknown to us. Kotzebue still lives in our minds as the representative of a nation that despises him; Schiller is chiefly known to us by the monstrous production of his boyhood; . . . But of all these people there is none that has been more unjustly dealt with than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. For half a century the admiration, we might almost say the idol of his countrymen, to us he is still a stranger. . . . Now, it must no doubt be granted, that so long as our invaluable constitution is preserved in its pristine purity, the British nation may exist in a state of comparative prosperity with very inadequate ideas of Goethe: but, at the same time, the present arrangement is an evil in its kind; slight, it is true, and easy to be borne, yet still more easy to be remedied, . . . Minds like Goethe's are the common property of all nations. . . . The history of Mignon runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed to the head. Philosophy and eloquence might have done the rest; but this is poetry in the highest meaning of the word. It must be for the power of producing such creations and emotions, that Goethe is by many of his countrymen ranked at the side of Homer and Shakespeare, as one of the only three men of genius that have ever lived.

Yet years later the following curious comparison and prophecy was made by De Quincey:

> Both are now gone—Goethe and Coleridge; both are honoured by those who knew them and by multitudes who did not. But the honours of Coleridge are perennial and will annually grow more verdant; whilst from those of Goethe every generation will see something fall away, until posterity will wonder at the subverted idol, whose basis, being hollow and unsound, will leave the worship of their fathers an enigma to their descendants.

Although "Faust" has been translated many times into English, and several times within the last ten years, *e.g.*, by G. M. Cookson (1928), by the late William Page Andrews, revised by Priest and Weston (1929), by Miss Alice Raphael (1930), the best version is still that by Bayard Taylor (1871), which is one of the greatest translations made of anything. It is as close to the language, music, rhythm, and meaning of the original as it is pos-

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sible for a foreign tongue to be. Taylor combined literalness with beauty.

One illustration will suffice; and if the reader should compare other English translations with the one I am about to quote, he would agree on the supremacy of Taylor's. It is the last stanza of the beautiful Dedication.

Und mich ergreift ein längst entwöhntes Sehnen
Nach jenem stillen, ernsten Geisterreich;
Es schwebet nun in unbestimmten Tönen
Mein lispelnd Lied, der Aeolsharfe gleich:
Ein Schauer fasst mich, Thräne folgt den Thränen,
Das strenge Herz, es fühlt sich mild und weich;
Was ich besitze, seh ich wie im Weiten,
Und was verschwand, wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten.

And grasps me now a long-unwonted yearning
For that serene and solemn Spirit-Land:
My song, to faint Æolian murmurs turning,
Sways like a harp-string by the breezes fanned.
I thrill and tremble; tear on tear is burning,
And the stern heart is tenderly unmanned.
What I possess, I see far distant lying,
And what I lost, grows real and undying.

Although it is fortunate that we may now possess Taylor's translation of both parts in one cheap and well-printed volume, it is still possible, I believe, to buy a copy of the magnificent original edition in two large volumes, with enormous type, that appeared in 1871, published by Fields, Osgood, and Co., in Boston. I wrote to Houghton Mifflin and Co. a few months ago and got the two volumes for ten dollars; whether there are any left I do not know.

As Taylor made the best English translation of "Faust," so the late James Elroy Flecker made the finest translation of the lyric "Kennst du das Land?" which to me is the most beautiful and affecting song ever written. And one should hear Mme. Bori sing the French version in the opera "Mignon."

The turbulence of undisciplined adolescence, expressed so perfectly by Keats in the Preface to "Endymion," revealed so clearly and poetically by Browning in "Pauline," was portrayed by Goethe in "Götz von Berlichingen" and in "The Sorrows of Young Werther" with such fury of unsatisfied passion that it set Europe aflame. It is interesting to observe how completely all three of these men of genius escaped from this thrall. It seems almost incredible that the author of "Wilhelm Meister," "Iphigenia," "Faust," and the "Conversations" could ever have written those early works. There was in Goethe a steady spiritual growth from the unrestrained fancies and wild passions of his youth to the beautiful serenity of his old age.

Perhaps there never was a man of literary genius who was so punctilious a gentleman. One of the most thrilling episodes in history is the meeting of Germany's two greatest men, Beethoven and Goethe—each had tremendous reverence for the other's genius, but there was an amusing contrast between their appearance and manners. Beethoven was only five foot six but broad and "built close to the ground," as we say of a football player; Goethe was fairly tall. Beethoven was untidy and Goethe scrupulously groomed. What a moment when Goethe knocked at the musician's door and Beethoven himself opened it!

Although there seems to be some doubt as to the authenticity of Bettina von Arnim's Letters describing the famous occasion when each of the two men ran true to form, it is certain that something of the kind happened.

Goethe and Beethoven were walking arm in arm; —what a spectacle!—there came toward them the Empress, the Dukes and the entire court:
(Bettina to Prince Puckler-Muskau)

Beethoven said, "Keep hold of my arm, they must make room for us, not we for them." Goethe was of a different opinion, and the situation became awkward for him; he let go of Beethoven's arm, and took a stand at the side with his hat off, while Beethoven with folded arms walked right through the dukes and only tilted his hat slightly while the dukes stepped aside to make room for him, and all greeted him pleasantly; on the other side he stopped and waited for Goethe, who had permitted the company to pass by him where he stood with bowed head. "Well," he said, "I've waited for you because I honor and respect you as you deserve, but you did those yonder too much honor."

Afterwards Beethoven came running to us and told us everything and was glad like a child because he had so teased Goethe.

(Beethoven to Bettina)

When two such as I and Goethe meet together, these grand gentlemen are forced to note what greatness, in such as we are, means. Yesterday on the way home we met the whole Imperial family. . . . Goethe slipped away from me, and stood on one side. Say what I would, I could not induce him to advance another step, so I pushed my hat on my head, buttoned up my overcoat, and went, arms folded, into the thickest of the crowd. . . . Persons of rank *know* me. To my great amusement I saw the procession defile past Goethe. Hat in hand, he stood at the side, deeply bowing.

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(Goethe to Zelter)

His talent amazed me. However, unfortunately, he is an utterly untamed personality, not at all in the wrong, if he finds the world detestable, but he thereby does not make it more enjoyable either for himself or others. He is very much to be excused, on the other hand, and very much to be pitied, as his hearing is leaving him, which, perhaps, injures the musical part of his nature less than his social.

In "Wilhelm Meister," a discussion arose as to the distinction between a *noble* and a *well-bred* manner, and Serlo said:

A well-bred carriage is difficult to imitate; for in strictness it is negative; and it implies a long-continued previous training. You are not required to exhibit in your manner anything that specially betokens dignity; for, by this means, you are like to run into formality and haughtiness; you are rather to avoid whatever is undignified and vulgar. You are never to forget yourself; are to keep a constant watch upon yourself and others; to forgive nothing that is faulty in your own conduct, in that of others neither to forgive too little or too much. Nothing must appear to touch you, nothing to agitate: you must never overhaste yourself, must ever keep yourself composed, retaining still an outward calmness, whatever storms may rage within. The noble character at certain moments may resign himself to his emotions; the well-bred never. The latter is like a man dressed out in fair and spotless clothes; he will not lean on anything; every person will beware of rubbing on him. He distinguishes himself from others, yet he may not stand apart; for as in all arts, so in this, the hardest must at length be done with ease; the well-bred man of rank, in spite of every separation, always seems united with the people around him; he is never to be stiff, or uncomplying; he is always to appear the first, and never to insist on so appearing.

It is clear, then, that to seem well-bred, a man must actually be so. It is also clear why women generally are more expert at taking up the air of breeding than the other sex.

I am aware that many of my readers are familiar with Eckermann's "Conversations"; but perhaps some are not. This is a book one should read and reread. It should be accessible, and now we have it in convenient form for less than a dollar. This is one of the wisest and richest of all volumes; it is a book to be shipwrecked with. It is almost impossible to open it at random without finding some illuminating remark. And here, taking a chance, I open at page 201, and find that Goethe is comparing the traditions of culture in a country like France or ancient Greece with the intellectual poverty of Germany. (Incidentally this is why America is inferior to England and Australia to America.) He has been speaking of the brilliance, so early developed, of Mérimée and of Béranger.

If a talent is to be speedily and happily developed, the great point is that a great deal of intellect and sound culture should be current in a nation.

We admire the tragedies of the ancient Greeks. But, to take a correct view of the case, we ought rather to admire the period and the nation in which their production was possible, than the individual authors; for, though these pieces differ a little from each other, and though one of these poets appears somewhat greater and more finished than another, still, taking all together, only one decided character runs through the whole: grandeur, fitness, soundness, human perfection, elevated wisdom, sublime thought, pure strong intuition, etc. But when we find all these qualities, not only in the dramatic works that have come down to us, but also in lyrical and epic works—in the philosophers, the orators, and the historians, and in an equally high degree in the works of plastic art that have come down to us—we must feel convinced that such qualities did not merely belong to individuals, but were the current property of the nation and the whole period.

The late Calvin Thomas, professor of German at Columbia, and one of the best German scholars and teachers in America, had the misfortune to publish his "Life of Goethe" in 1917. This was a time when many patriotic Americans smashed Victrola records of Beethoven and Wagner, and refused to listen to Bach or any other work written by a damned German. His book of course failed to circulate and I was told that many were afraid to review it, though it was an impersonal, objective, scholarly biography. I reviewed it in *The Dial,* and Mr. Thomas wrote me the following letter from a sickbed:

When I was a young instructor at Ann Arbor I was employed as arbiter in a lawsuit between the editors of the students' paper and its publisher. The evidence obliged me to decide in favor of the publisher, whereupon he offered me a box of cigars. I spurned the *ex post facto* bribe, saying that I needed no material reward for doing my duty.

So I do not undertake to reward you for your review of my Goethe, but I wish you to know that I have read it with satisfaction, and convalescing, as I am, from a rather serious illness, and stoically facing, as I do, a great and growing hostility to everything German—even the great writers of the 18th century—I have naturally been heartened by your words of critical cordial appreciation.

With all good wishes for you and yours

Nov. 12, 1917. CALVIN THOMAS.

I was not pro-German in the war; but I was just as fiercely pro-Goethe in 1917 as in 1886 and 1932.

I live with Goethe. I think of him every day. If

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you must choose, it is better to have a Goethe balance than a bank balance. The latter may be lost. Moth and rust corrupt and riches have wings.

I have written at such length about Goethe, there is no room for extended comment on new books. But I will heartily recommend the following: "The Unknown War," by Winston Churchill. This interesting man has the temperament of the advocate, partisan, fighter, rather than that of the calm historian; hence, in reading this work, we may be certain that other military authorities would not indorse every page. But it is all the more exciting because of the fervent temperament from which it came.

"Discretions" by Countess Warwick—and if you want to know, how a countess can be a socialist, read and learn. It is an entertaining autobiography. "Modern India," a co-operative work, *multum in parvo,* edited by Sir J. Cumming, is full of interesting and valuable information, and sedulously avoids the sensational. Those who want facts more than fancies will do well to read this little book. For my part, I hope England will hold on to India indefinitely. "High Hats and Low Bows," by Ellery Walter, who went around the world on one leg, here describes personal interviews with the Pope, Mussolini, and other leaders. "Wellington," by Guedalla, shows that the "man who beat Napoleon" did many other notable things—victory with him was not a fluke; it was a habit. Had he been a brilliant genius, Napoleon would have smashed him. He had the qualities most awkward for a genius to deal with; absolute fearlessness, icy composure, endless patience, bulldog tenacity. . . . Meanwhile observe that the vigorous "Autobiography" of Lincoln Steffens has been published in a cheaper form.

The year 1931 has seen many remarkable novels. I recommend "All Passion Spent," by V. Sackville West; it is so much better than her "The Edwardians" there is no comparison; "Westward Passage," by Margaret Ayer Barnes, distinctly better than the novel which gave her a prize; "Unfinished Business," by John Erskine, his best; brilliant and original; it has an excellent motor; "Return I Dare Not," by Margaret Kennedy, very good indeed; "Finch's Fortune," by Mazo de la Roche, carrying on with the same family we learned to know in "Jalna"; "Broome Stages," by Clemence Dane, altogether too long, but a fine history of a family of the London theatres; and I am deeply grateful to General W. B. Parsons for urging me to read "The Lady Who Came to Stay," by R. E. Spencer, for it is imaginative and profound.

Thornton Wilder has produced a volume of short plays called "The Long Christmas Dinner," worth seeing on the stage and worth attentive reading. They have a touch of genius. He is one of the few contemporary writers who does not need five hundred pages for an idea.

The best boys' book I have seen for a long while is "The Indian Nugget," by Julius King, which boys from eight to eighty will find enchanting, though aimed at those from eight to eighteen.

And here are a few thrillers. "Birds of the Night," by Austin Moore: "About the Murder of the Night Club Lady," by Anthony Abbot: "The Party at the Penthouse," by Arthur M. Chase. Mr. Chase has been publishing books in the firm of Dodd, Mead & Company since the last century, and thought it high time he wrote something himself.

And speaking further of thrillers, Dornford Yates, master of the art, in his new novel "Safe Custody" has published a super-thriller, which I will guarantee to hold the attention of anybody, old or young, from first page to last.

It is certainly a good thing to publish corrections of mistakes in this column, including my own, for the question of good English is important, and no one is infallible. Here is another excellent letter: from Gertrude W. Page, of Los Angeles, Calif.:

Don't you think your "Doctor Herbert Clarke, of Syracuse, N. Y.," is just a wee bit naïf in his surprise that a University Professor should be ignorant of the correct use of the two very ordinary words *flout* and *flaunt?* He must be acquainted with only a very limited and highly select class of University Professors in order to be surprised at *any* kind of ignorance within University precincts now-a-days. On the other hand, the Professors can retort that they are not the only offenders. They can quote. . . . the *Saturday Review of Literature:* "Like the expert in any field, he is so thoroughly conversant with the conventions of his art that he can with impunity *flaunt* them when his writing would seem to gain in variety and expressiveness by so doing."

From Pearl Robertson, of Bozeman, Mont.:

Before your correspondent, Mr. Herbert Clarke, becomes excited over Professor Dodd's mis-use of *flaunt,* he should learn that it is the University of Chicago, not Chicago University.

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This is a much-needed correction; and other common mistakes in academic appellations are "John Hopkins University," "Smith's College," "Brown's University," "Magdalene College, Oxford," "Magdalen College, Cambridge," "Queen's College, Cambridge," "Queens' College, Oxford," "Kings' College, Cambridge." All these are wrong.

From M. Meyers, of Brooklyn, N. Y.:

Through your otherwise admirable column in SCRIBNER'S, November issue, runs a note of complacency and unctuous contentment that is, to express it mildly, a trifle inappropriate in these days of depression.

To illustrate: "It was the U. S. A., the most comfortable country on earth." Again, "Every novel I read by one who lives there makes me more content than ever to live in the United States of America."

May I call your attention to an article in the current issue of the *New Republic,* which describes the conditions existing in the mining districts of Kentucky? It would appear from the facts presented, that for some the U. S. A. is *not* the most comfortable country on earth; and that there are others who have no reason to be content to live in the United States of America.

The least that those who dwell in cloistered security can do, is to obey that humane command, "Don't cheer, boys, the poor devils are dying."

No, the least we can do is to help those who are less fortunate, not by refraining from cheering nor even by giving them three cheers, but by helping, giving the means of life. Yet it is still true that the U. S. A. is more comfortable than Europe and Europe more comfortable than Asia.

From Doctor Edward W. Twitchell, of San Francisco:

Medical men long used the German *Geschwister,* in default of an English equivalent. Some indeed used the Latin *fratres,* but the introduction of siblings has gradually displaced the other two.

Siblings, however, is not synonymous with relations in present medical usage, so sisters, cousins and aunts, while sib, are not siblings.

From Harold Wentworth, Cornell University:

A sibling is any person not a twin, triplet, or quadruplet. The word is so used in at least one psychology textbook used at Cornell some five years ago. Webster's "New International Dictionary" agrees with the above definition, but adds one qualification. *Siblings,* as an adverb only, is also entered there. I have notified the editor of Webster's "N. I. D." of your use of *siblings* in the December "As I Like It."

The word *brister* appeared in print at least as early as Nov. 20, 1909, when the N. Y. *Sun* printed a letter suggesting the word. Being horrible, it has gained no currency, as far as I know.

From Doctor A. L. Hill, of Rutherfordton, N. C.:

I take the following definitions from Dorland's medical dictionary:

sib (Anglo-Saxon sib, kin). Related by blood; a blood relation.

sibling. One of two or more offspring of the same parents.

sibred. Relationship; kindred.

From Doctor L. Minor Blackford, Atlanta, Ga.:

You have probably already heard that your understanding of "siblings" was incorrect. Webster says, "Sibling (sib plus 1st-ling). One of two or more children of the same parents but not of the same birth;—usually in pl."

If the words were an exact synonym of "relative" there would be no place for it in the language. It is a purely artificial word, originate, I believe, at the Hopkins. It is most useful in writing up the "Family History," in a case report. *E.g.* "The patient's father died of pulmonary tuberculosis at 35. Her mother and seven siblings were living and well. . . ." In my private records, I write, "4 B & S 1 & w." Sometimes in psychiatry, for example, it is useful to know that a man has seven older sisters, but ordinarily the sex of the siblings is immaterial. I hope the word will remain entirely in scientific writing.

I learn from Murray's "New English Dictionary" that the word first appeared in England in the year 1000 and again in 1425, and that it is an exact synonym for "relatives." But it is marked "obsolete."

I have made up my mind to let it alone.

BOOKS MENTIONED, WITH AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS

Taylor's translation of "Faust," both parts. Modern Library. 95 cents.
"Wilhelm Meister," translated by Carlyle. Two volumes. Everyman's Library. Dutton. 90 cents each.
Oxenford's translation of Eckermann's "Conversations with Goethe." Everyman's Library. Dutton. 90 cents.
"The Unknown War," by Winston Churchill. Scribners. $5.
"Discretions," by Countess Warwick. Scribners. $3.
"Modern India," ed. by Sir J. Cumming. Oxford. $2.
"Wellington," by P. Guedalla. Harpers. $4.
"High Hats and Low Bows," by E. Walter. Putnam. $3.
"Autobiography," by Lincoln Steffens. Harcourt Brace. $3.75.
"All Passion Spent," by V. Sackville West. Doubleday Doran. $2.50.
"Westward Passage," by M. A. Barnes. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.
"Return I Dare Not," by Margaret Kennedy. Doubleday Doran. $2.50.
"Unfinished Business," by John Erskine. Bobbs Merrill. $2.50.
"Finch's Fortune," by M. de la Roche. Little Brown. $2.50.
"Broome Stages," by Clemence Dane. Doubleday Doran. $3.
"The Lady Who Came to Stay," by R. E. Spencer. Knopf. $2.
"The Indian Nugget," by Julius King. W. J. Black. $1.75.
"Birds of the Night," by Austin Moore. R. B. Smith. $2.
"About the Murder of the Night Club Lady," by A. Abbott. Covici Friede. $2.
"The Party at the Penthouse," by Arthur Chase. Dodd Mead. $2.
"Safe Custody," by Dornford Yates. Minton Balch. $2.

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STRAWS IN THE WIND

Significant notes in American life to-day

SHALL MARRIED WOMEN BE FIRED?

By Helen Buckler

MARRIED women should leave their jobs and go back home. Then there would be enough jobs to go around. So runs one of the popular cures for the plight of working people. In their enthusiasm for a solution of our difficulties so simple and direct, energetic legislators from Nebraska to New York are not waiting upon the altruism of wage-earning wives. They propose bills calculated to force, if need be, a reluctant regard for the public welfare.

A congressman in Washington asks that all married women in the Federal service be discharged. A Mid-Western governor declares no married woman should have "a State House job nor any other job." The director of emergency relief in an Eastern State calls for an "immediate readjustment of job distribution," pointing out that many persons are holding jobs who do not need them, "such as married women." A New England State employment committee recommends that employers dismiss wives whose husbands can support them and it is reported that the suggestion is being followed by a bank and a telephone company. A gas concern in the Mississippi valley fires its married-women employees. A railway in the South follows suit and any woman on the pay roll who ventures to enter matrimony, automatically severs her connection with the company. A Northern board of education requests the resignation of a third of its school nurses on the ground that they are married, the superintendent of schools taking the position that "married women can look to their husbands for support."

Some organizations and individuals have been aroused to defend the married woman. A few who have gone on record against the dismissal of married-women workers on the sole ground that they are married, are the industrial commissioner of New York State, a city official in Los Angeles, the National Consumers' League, the National Woman's Party, and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

That more married women, both numerically and proportionately, are working outside their homes than ever before in the history of the country, cannot be gainsaid. Since 1890 the employment of all women workers has increased 150 per cent, but that of married-women workers has increased 270 per cent, until now one out of every 11 wives is gainfully employed, and one out of every 4 of the 10,000,000 women wage earners is a married woman living with her husband.

Some will tell you the unprecedented increase in employment of married women is a result of the new freedom, a by-product of suffrage. Others will insist that the actuating motive has been a desire for pin-money and extra luxuries. Many see in the phenomenon an eagerness, aided by the mechanical improvement of housekeeping implements and the wide-spread industrialization of food and clothing products, to get out of the domestic routine. A Brooklyn clergyman insists that the situation is due to the young women of this generation "who are indulging their selfish desire to remain independent though married."

No serious conclusion may be had from opinion alone, based, as it must be, on limited personal knowledge. Fortunately we have more reliable data at hand. The Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor has made careful scientific studies of the employment of married women in various occupations in various parts of the country. They have collected facts and figures, and have sent trained field workers into the homes to talk directly with these working wives.

Everywhere the question was asked: "Why do you work outside your home?" and the answer again and again was "Because I have to"; "My husband can't get work"; "My husband doesn't make enough to keep us"; "My husband is ill." Or, if the urgency was not so great, still it was there: "To help us get ahead a little"; "To give my children a better education than I had." Many women who had written "Single" on their factory cards confessed they had done so, although they were married, through fear of losing their jobs.

Of married women laundry workers in 23 cities, 9 out of every 10 reported they were working to help support their families. Of the other 10 per cent, moreover, many other cases could also have been counted as cases of necessity: "to pay doctor and hospital bills"; "to educate our children"; "to save for the future." Only 2 per cent were frankly working for extras, to buy cars, and so on, and another 2 per cent because they were "used to it" or wanted to.

In Denver, 90 per cent of the married women who applied over a period of several months to the employment office of the Young Women's Christian Association said necessity had forced them to seek work. They "were by no means a group of young women unburdened by responsibility." Less than one-sixth were under 25, less than a third under 30 years of age. One old nurse, 88 years old, sought to support herself and her blind husband. Three-fourths of these women received no aid at all from their husbands and more than half of those who did found it irregular and inadequate. Almost half of them had children under 16.

In the same city, over a similar period, 91 per cent of the married women applying to a certain department store for work, said they were driven to do so because of necessity. The majority of a group of employed wives interviewed in Flint, Michigan, said they were working because, due to short time and lay-offs, their husbands did not make enough to keep the family.

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The data assembled by the Women's Bureau relate to the "average married woman in industry," not to special types. Their studies have covered widely separated American cities, thus securing a wide range of regional and local influences. From all these investigations, Mary N. Winslow, editor of *The Women's Bureau,* says, "We have reached one definite conclusion: . . . married women are in industry for one purpose and, generally speaking, one purpose only—to provide necessities for their families or to raise their standard of living."

The very occupations in which the great majority of married-women workers engage in this country are of the sort that only necessity would force a married woman to enter. The point may be a surprise to those of us who have formed conclusions from our own acquaintanceship with women in business and the professions.

For every woman who is finding a happier life in an interesting profession, scores are growing old and worn in drudgery and the double burden of long work hours and home keeping besides. At the last census for which analysis is available, only about six and a half per cent of the gainfully occupied married women were engaged in the professions; 8 per cent were in trade; and about 7 per cent in clerical work.

This is the sort of work that most married women go out to: In South Carolina, a third of the white women wage earners, most of them in mills, are wives. Another 15 per cent are widows or separated. In Illinois more than half the women workers in the manufacturing of glue, house furnishings, tobacco, slaughtering and meat packing, and in the laundries, are wives, widows, or separated. In Washington, two-thirds of the women workers in the fruit and fish canning industries, and in Delaware, three-fourths of the women workers in canneries are or have been married.

The truth is, the majority of the 2,000,000 wage-earning wives in the country are doing unskilled work. Now married women do not work long days in textile mills or go out to scrub office floors at night in order to assert their right to the new freedom or to be selfishly independent.

The old, old fallacy that married women work only for pin-money, to buy more finery than their husbands can afford to give them, will not die a decent death. The truth is that instead of serving for pin-money, the wife's wages are more often the "coupling pin that holds the family together and makes both ends meet." One study made by the Women's Bureau showed that 95 per cent of the wives employed contributed *all* their earnings to the family support.

To see why this state of affairs exists we have only to examine the wages that are paid to men in this country. Here, at last, we come to the essential reason why married women have gone out to work in such increasingly large numbers. Given a full year's work with no lay-offs (only a fabulous dream in these days) an able-bodied willing man cannot earn enough money in industry after industry, to support his family at a minimum standard of health and decency!

To do so, with no margin for savings, a man with a wife and two children must earn from $1,442 to $1,660 a year, depending on the community, or a weekly wage of from $28 to $32 for the full 52 weeks. The figures are based on studies of the National Industrial Conference Board for 1927. Yet, in the third quarter of that same year, the conference board reports that twenty-five industries in three States averaged a wage of only $24.13 per week for unskilled labor. Even skilled labor in these industries averaged only $31 a week, the minimum for safety. In 15 out of the 25 industries studied, both skilled and unskilled labor was paid a wage below these averages. To this situation should be added the important fact that, even in normal times, loss from slack work runs into three weeks per year in the representative industries.

Of a group of wives who went out to work in Manchester, New Hampshire, only about 27 per cent had husbands who were earning as much as $1,500 a year. Almost a fifth earned less than $1,000, just two-thirds of the amount required to maintain a reasonable health-decency standard of living. In Pennsylvania another group of working wives disclosed that not even a quarter of them had husbands who earned as much as $30 a week, while more than 18 per cent earned less than $20 a week.

Interviews with these women revealed their constant dread of sickness and unemployment. A woman cigar maker was supporting her husband and two young children because in six months' time the husband had had only four days' work. Another woman had three children and an injured husband who had been laid up for five months. His compensation was only $12.50 a week. They lived in one room and used a neighbor's kitchen. "The mother, it is hardly necessary to state, was employed."

All these facts reveal the utter impossibility of dismissing the great majority of married women from their jobs without providing some substitute for their needed contribution to the family support. There remains the small minority whose husbands can support them and their children. But who shall decide when that income is sufficient for that family? Who shall set their standard of living and decide whether or not they may save for their old age, for the education of their children, for illnesses, for possible unemployment, and other contingencies? Shall the combined income of husband and wife be held down to $2,000 as was proposed in the Nebraska legislature?

Why should not every family income, then, whether earned by husband and wife, or husband alone, or with the help of an employed son or daughter, be held down to some minimum figure? Certainly, why not limit unearned incomes? These hasty would-be economists who urge the dismissal of wives as a cure-all for bad times have conceivably not realized the ultimate conclusions to which their own theory leads, or they would be horrified indeed at the ultra-radical ball they have set rolling.

There are other practical questions which the promulgators of this easy device to relieve the depression have not considered. From industry's point of view, is it efficient to dismiss trained workers in order to take on raw recruits? Will taking women out of, say, candy factories, give men jobs in the steel mills?

As a matter of fact, economists have

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pointed out that "The married woman who is employed does not permanently drive others out of work."* Indeed, she helps to create opportunity for employing others. The wages she earns enable her and her family to buy more products than otherwise, and more labor thus has to be employed to satisfy the heightened demand.

Furthermore, a study of the Women's Bureau points out the wider distribution of women over the field of industry and commerce has not, on the whole, impaired the quality of employment opportunities of men. Neither men nor boys have taken the places in the old industries deserted by women. The last census figures show that the numbers of both men and boy workers have increased more than have the numbers of women and girl wage earners. It is not denied that occupations may have shifted to some extent. If some men's jobs have gone to women, some women's jobs have also gone to men, and both have lost to machines. Still, the net increase in women's jobs has not been accompanied by a net decrease in jobs for men.

Perhaps we should thank the promoters of this get-over-the-depression-quick device, inept though it is. By their very blundering they have forcibly called attention to other questions that press for answer. Is it doing the American home and our future citizenship any good to have wives and mothers driven into carrying a double burden of wage-earning and home keeping? How long shall industry be allowed to pay less than a living wage to many thousands of husbands and fathers? Is it ethical or even sound economics to base pay for any job on sex or marital status of the worker, rather than on his fitness for the job?

*"The Problem of Unemployment," by Paul H. Douglas and Aaron Director, 1931.

A FRANCO-GERMAN ENTENTE

By Albert Guérard

"WHAT is the matter with the French, anyway?" The question is pertinent; but, like jesting Pilate, we never pause for an answer. Whatever they have in mind, they are wrong. One of my superior officers in the American army gracefully instructed me: "See what those d—— Frogs are doing and tell them not to." This at any rate is a very definite national policy. It translates itself into those amiably vigorous terms so dear to red-blooded editors: "Show France who is boss. . . . Come to a show-down. . . . Tell the French where to get off. . . . Make them sign on the dotted line. . . ." Shirt-sleeve diplomacy, with the sleeves rolled up.

I beg to submit that, in such a frame of mind, the cause of peace and reconciliation can hardly be advanced. We might send another A. E. F. to Brest and St. Nazaire in order to break the wicked will of M. Aristide Briand: but it might be wise to find out what will it is that we are seeking to break. Before the Armistice, a shrieking poster appeared on the walls of Paris: "With incendiarists and murderers, no discussion! They must be brought to justice." Aye, justice. But justice means discussion. It means providing the accused with a counsel, warning him not to incriminate himself, allowing the defense to call and cross-examine witnesses, and to challenge jurors. If we go to the Disarmament Conference with the single desire to make our own will prevail, that solemn palaver will be purely a verbose and bloodless war, breeder of other wars of a sterner kind. If we go prepared to *discuss,* to see the other man's point of view, to admit that, in the important matter of sauce, there should be "parity" between the goose and the gander, then the conference may in truth herald a new era.

Popular imagination thinks in cartoons, and cartoons never seem to be fully effective until they are antiquated. John Bull and Uncle Sam belong to bygone ages. The stage Frenchman wore an imperial goatee fifty years after the downfall of Napoleon III. At present, France, to many of us, is still "The Tiger." For a few tragic months Clemenceau's will was the will of France. Even then, he was not purely the incarnation of the national spirit: he was also a ruthless dictator. Clemenceau fell in 1920: France remains. Even Clemenceau, in whom the lurid memories of 1871 had never faded, was very different from the implacable *Revanchard* of legend. Twice in his checkered career he had to take his choice between civilian democracy and militarism: at the time of the Boulanger crisis and at the time of the Dreyfus affair. In both cases he sided with the defenders of liberty and justice against the *League of Patriots.* If he were a German to-day he would be fighting against Hitler and Hugenberg.

The leaders of American public opinion take it for granted that France desires to hold Germany in total subjection. This subjection is written into the treaty of Versailles, and France's aim is to keep Versailles forever unchanged: either through the sheer weight of her military supremacy or with the assistance of the whole world. But all this is based on assumptions so crudely simplified that they become untrue.

It is a great mistake to believe that the French are animated by implacable hatred against Germany. There is no blood feud, no racial antagonism, between the two peoples. On the contrary, mutual appreciation is a long and honorable tradition with both of them. One of our innumerable Peace Foundations would do well to publish two companion Anthologies: French Tributes to Germany, German Tributes to France. Both, I believe, would be substantial and brilliant volumes.

Nor is that fine spirit absent to-day. The forces for *rapprochement* have never been so active. Not only are German scientists, musicians, writers, welcome in Paris; but such a visit as that of M. Laval and Briand to Berlin would have been unthinkable before 1914. The President of the Paris Municipal Council, M. François-Latour, was received with more than official courtesy in the German capital, and cordially invited the Berlin Burgomaster in return. A manifesto in favor of Franco-German reconciliation, initiated by the excellent magazine *Notre Temps,* was indorsed by hundreds among the intellectual leaders of the new generation. Of the French electorate, 3,000,000, *i. e.,* 30 per cent, are either Socialists or Communists, and committed to an international outlook. The so-called "Radicals," probably the truest representatives of the French *petite bourgeoisie,* follow

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Briand, Herriot, Painlevé, Laval, in a policy of friendly co-operation. The great industrial and financial interests are heartily in favor of a close economic association with the Reich. Steel *cartel*, potash combine, chemical entente, are among the practical results of that spirit. The commissions appointed in both countries to work out a plan of economic collaboration are filled with capable men, who mean business. Even a Lorrainer and a soldier like Lyautey considers a Franco-German war as "fratricide." Even Poincaré, doubly close-fisted, for economy and for defense, states at last that the nationalistic chaos in Europe is "suicidal." The only irreconcilables are the French *Junker*, the *Camelots du Roy*, those whom a venerable priest once called "pious hooligans," with the principles of a Prussian lieutenant and the manners of a Chicago racketeer. They may break up a peace meeting: they cannot break France's will to peace.

A Franco-German entente is not merely in the air: it has actually started, it is growing. The French, I believe, would be glad to proclaim it on the housetops; the reasonable elements in Germany, including President von Hindenburg and Chancellor Bruening, are more than ready to respond. But the German leaders are far less free than their French colleagues. The moral and material situation of the Reich is precarious if not desperate; public opinion is morbidly nervous. Generosity, tact, patience will be imperiously needed. "Fanning the flames," the favorite pastime of American pacifists and liberals, is about the worst thing that could be done. The key to Franco-German reconciliation is trust, and trust cannot be imposed by Uncle Sam's big stick. Peace is a state of mind: we shall not foster peace by declaring war, with our bellicose friend Oswald Garrison Villard, upon "France, the enemy of mankind."

I am not prophesying that a formal Franco-German entente will soon be announced to a bewildered world. I am only stating the plain fact that at present the forces making for an entente have actually a better chance than the forces making for war. But the best chances may be frittered away: through a wise compromise on the Luxembourg question, France and Prussia had avoided war, and the outlook in the early summer of 1870 was unusually promising. So long as we have national policies backed by armaments—in other words, so long as the Kellogg Pact is a sham—we shall be at the mercy of silly incidents and the yellow press. The solution, we all agree, is disarmament: disarmament in its double aspect, material and moral.

Moral disarmament is by far the more important. Nations with huge armies and navies may live in profound peace: a war between Great Britain and ourselves is almost unthinkable. Nations without weapons, but with hatred in their hearts, will fight with ploughshares beaten into swords, with trucks rigged up as tanks, with converted liners, with commercial airplanes, with peaceful chemicals turned overnight into deadly gases.

Here comes the fundamental difference between the French and the German points of view. For the French, moral disarmament implies, first of all, the acceptance of existing treaties; for the Germans, their rejection.

Both attitudes have their justification. In its clauses, Versailles may not be worse than Vienna, Utrecht, Münster. But it is vitiated in its very essence because, after the most solemn promises of justice, it was imposed by sheer force; and because—supreme hypocrisy—a confession of guilt was exacted by a few turns of the rack. The spirit of 1919 is incompatible with the health of the world. If there are Frenchmen who still consider Versailles as the unchangeable law of Europe they are indeed the "enemies of mankind," and first of all the enemies of France. Unquestionably, they are poor students of history. The treaties of Westphalia gave the monarchy of Louis XIV half a century of predominance, to be paid for by ruin and disaster. Fifteen years after Waterloo the treaties of Vienna, although not formally torn up, were so frayed and tattered as to be useless. "Never say never," as Napoleon III told Rouher.

But what is the alternative to acceptance? Militant rebellion? The spirit of Rudolf Herzog in *Wieland der Schmied*? The classical example is Prussia after Jena. No promise exacted by a victor is binding: Versailles is worth as much as Bucharest or Brest-Litovsk, and no more. All imposed restrictions are merely challenges to ingenuity: Napoleon limited the size of the Prussian army, and the result was that the whole nation was drilled for war; the Allies limited the tonnage of German battleships, and the result was the "pocket dreadnought" *Deutschland*.

From the point of view of old-fashioned patriotism such an attitude is unimpeachable. But it is not peace: it is war. At any rate, it is an armistice: if the conquered is justified in biding his time, the victor is no less justified in keeping the whip hand. Scraps of paper cannot be trusted: but big guns cannot be gainsaid.

Tragic dilemma: to preserve an unjust treaty is to perpetuate war; to tear up any treaty is an act of war. Is there no escape? Yes, there is: a winding, uneven, precarious mode of escape, but the only one that can reconcile peace with justice.

The first and plainest step is to reject war *absolutely*. *Nie mehr Krieg!* No exaction is so costly, no hardship is so frightful, no injustice is so unjust, as even the holiest of wars. It is far better that a few thousand East Prussians should have their baggage examined at the Polish border than that a million young men be torn by shrapnel or poisoned by gases. Whatever may be the crimes of peace, war is the greater crime. Peace must be maintained: ergo, the breaker of the peace, the aggressor, must be restrained.

But the present peace—the only peace we have—is based on the existing treaties. However unjust, the treaties must be enforced. A policeman, a judge, a President, must uphold even the laws of which they disapprove. Lincoln was right and John Brown was wrong. This assurance that there shall be no attempt to destroy by violence the existing law is exactly what France calls *security*. The demand for security is not a craven, hysterical, or selfish appeal for protection: it is a legal and moral conception. And it is the indispensable condition of disarmament.

But, security achieved and war absolutely ruled out, the way is open to a peaceful modification of the treaties. It is ridiculous to say that "France" as a nation stands for the immutability of the Versailles settlement. Versailles has already been amended, whittled down, superseded. All the personal responsibility clauses, the "Hang the Kaiser!"

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nonsense, are a dead letter. The *free* agreement of Locarno, not Versailles, is now France's title to her eastern frontier. The economic stipulations of the peace treaty have never been carried out, and never shall be.

Solvitur ambulando, as Bülow would have said. Hurl irresistible national despair against the immovable rock of a treaty and the result will be catastrophe. Start with the formal and legal acceptance of the treaty, and modification, which has already gone very far, will be immensely accelerated. We do not urge that Germany or America should endorse Versailles as a just and permanent settlement: we have condemned Versailles from its very inception. We urge that amendment be sought only by peaceful means; that war, even for just ends, be curbed by the combined efforts of mankind. *Thus we must underwrite the treaties before we alter them, but in order to alter them.*

The principle of our Kellogg Pact is exactly the same as the French principle of security: let *all* war be outlawed, war for the Polish corridor, war for the Trentino, war for Macedonia, war for the half-million Jugoslavs under the Italian flag. With war ruled out, the victors will no longer hold out against revision; arms will yield to the law; disarmament, which it would be futile to hope for in the present state of anarchy, will follow in due time.

EACH TO EACH

By Melville Cane

We were closed, each to each, yet dear.
We were taut with a covert pride;
We were tied
With a throttling fear;
We were undefined
And blind.

We were caught when we sought to reach;
We were mute when we strove for speech.
We were closed, each to each, yet dear.
We were vapid, polite, obscure
Through a merciless flood of pain;
We were trivial through strain;
We were desperate to endure.

Then a locked word slipped from your heart,
Like warm rain dropped on mine,
And the fog, that had held us apart,
Thinned,—we could dimly divine
The one we had groped for in vain.

And my hand touched yours, and the pain
That clutched and withered had fled,
And the fear and the pride lay dead,
And at last we were free, we were plain.

We were closed, each to each, yet dear.
We are close, we are clear.

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LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

The Ladies Call on Mr. Pussick

By Owen Francis

In steel-mill towns there is invariably a section called Hunkietown. Here live the major portion of the Hungarians, Poles, Czech and Jugo-Slavs, and the few Russians and Negroes who have come to work in the mills.

Always near the mill, Hunkietowns are a jumble of unpainted, frame houses blackened by mill grime, crooked streets usually unpaved, and numerous children.

By day there is an incessant din from the children playing at steel making; by night there are louder shouts from the elders, a wailing of violins and accordions. And always there is the aroma of cooking cabbage mingling with the pungent smell of wine, fermenting malt, and the stench of defective sewerage systems.

To the Hunkie, Hunkietown is a highly desirable place to live. For one thing, he is grouped with people who have the same ideas of work and recreation as he has; for another, his rent is cheap, enabling him to tuck away in the mattress more money from his pay or send a larger amount each month to the old country, where what money he sends enables his parents to live without worry and pay the passage of a cousin who has ambitions to come to America—"land of the free." If left alone the Hunkie will go about his work in the mill cheerfully, become an American citizen as soon as possible, raise a family of future steel makers, and live at peace with the world. Try to change his mode of living and there will be a misunderstanding, as was the case of Pete Pussick when it came to the attention of the Excelsior Club.

Pete Pussick was a typical Hunkie steel worker. He had come to America six years before and had been given a job in the 18-inch mill shovelling scale from beneath the rolls. The pay was $4.40 a day. Pete considered himself a fortunate man. He worked hard, repaid the passage fare to a friend who had sent it to him in the old country, and, when he realized his ambition by being given a job pushing billets out of the furnace, an important position indeed and one that paid tonnage rates, like "American mans," he married a wide-hipped, red-cheeked Slavish maiden and settled down in Hunkietown to the business of raising a family. Pete did well: his work was satisfactory to his boss, his wife made good prune-jack, Young Pete and Johnnie had been born, and another child was soon to come. With the exception of an occasional billet falling off the furnace trough and delaying the rolling of steel, Pete had nothing to worry him.

One evening he sat on the porch of his company-rented house looking down at the mill. He had just come from work and was tired. His bare feet were propped on the porch rail, where his toes could cool comfortably. It had been a hard turn: steel orders had been small, the day had been warm. What breeze there had been had come down the river, blowing the heat of the furnaces toward him, and the end of his pusher bar had been stuck in the furnace for a half-hour. But the small orders were finished now, it was cool on the porch, a bottle of beer was on the floor beside him, and from the kitchen came the smell of *chicken paprikas* with noodles. Pete sighed with contentment. He was at peace with the world.

There came a brisk knocking at the front door. Anna, his wife, yelled at him to see who was there. Pete went slowly to the door.

Before him stood five women: there were Mrs. Walker, whom he recognized, having seen her with Henry Walker, his boss in the mill, and four others.

"How do you do," said one of the ladies. "You are Mr. Peter Pussick, I believe."

"Sure," Pete answered. "Pete Pussick, dat's me."

"Mr. Pussick," continued the spokesman, "we are a delegation from the Excelsior Club. Do you mind if we step inside?"

"Ya damn right, you comit inside. Maybe you liket bottle beer what my old lady makit," answered Pete, leading the ladies into the combination dining-room and bedroom.

"I don't believe so, Mr. Pussick, thank you," was the answer as the other ladies seated themselves, two on the bed, two at the table. "We have come to be of service to you and your family. Each year we have done our missions of charity and I will say we have done good work. And this year we girls have a new plan which I know, with your cooperation, will be successful. I have talked with Mr. Andrews, who is in favor of the plan, and he has given us the house rent free for our experiment. We have made the house into a model home and want you and your family to move in. Is that agreeable to you, Mr. Pussick?"

"Sure, ya betcha," answered Pete, not understanding half of what was said, but recognizing the name of Mr. Andrews, who was general superintendent of the mill.

Mrs. Pussick came into the room to stand twisting her apron in her hands embarrassedly. As usual she was barefooted and as usual she utilized the

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spare moment to quiet Johnnie, who screamed lustily, by nursing him at her breast. The ladies looked from one to the other trying to avoid seeing Anna Pussick's bare feet and breast, the beer bottles stacked in the corner, and the dirty bed linen.

"I was just telling your husband, Mrs. Pussick," the spokesman said hurriedly, "of our plan. We have a model home which will be a godsend to you, as busy as you are with the children. Just think, Mrs. Pussick, you will live in a home that has convertible tubs in the basement, carpets on the floor, a vacuum cleaner, chintz curtains, a tile bath. In fact, it has every modern convenience and is a home that any of us would be pleased to have. Isn't that just splendid, Mrs. Pussick?"

"Me no speak good English," Mrs. Pussick answered, looking hopefully toward Pete. "If Pete say all right—all right."

Pete turned to his wife, speaking in Slavish:

"Go back to the kitchen! What the hell you want come monkey around here for anyway? I fix this business."

Pete then turned to the ladies apologetically.

"Old lady never learn nothing. She just knowit how to cook, how to have kids, how to makit prune-jack, dats all. You tell me and I fix everything."

"Then everything is arranged," continued the woman, glad that her work was done and she would have the opportunity of getting out into the air again. "We will have a van here early in the morning to move your personal belongings to your new home in New Plan Extension. And we thank you, Mr. Pussick, for your co-operation. We just know that our plan will work beautifully. Remember, we are relying upon you to set an example for the others and you won't mind if we bring the other Hunk—that is, the other Polish and Slavish matrons, to see just how a family should live, will you, Mr. Pussick?"

"Sure, bring everybody, dat's all right," agreed Pete heartily, as he shoved Young Pete out of their way with his foot.

The ladies left; Pete went back to his porch, where he sat with his brow wrinkled in deep thought. When supper was ready he gave up the perplexing problem until he could talk it over with his boss at the mill, but told Anna that in the morning the ladies would return, and for her to do as they said or he would clout her ears.

At the mill, the next day, Pete told Henry Walker, the heater, what had happened. Henry listened, trying hard to keep from laughing. He had often argued with his wife about her activities with the Ladies' Club, with the result that she never mentioned their plans until they were put into action. He now saw the opportunity of proving to her for once and for all that the members of the Excelsior Club would be of more value to the community if they stayed in their own kitchens, where, as he often told her, they belonged.

"That's good business," Henry told Pete. "Why, you will get a house for nothing. You won't have the fifteen bucks taken out of your pay each month. Go ahead, Pete, take the house."

Later on, to a group of us gathered in the shearman's shanty, he said laughingly:

"Jesus! but this is good. The Excelsior Club is on a rampage again, and what do you suppose they're up to now? They're moving Pete Pussick and his family into a model home to show the other Hunkies how they ought to live. Holy cats! What a shock they're going to get! I wouldn't miss this chance of razzing the missus for the world, so I told Pete to go ahead. All I got to do now is wait."

That night Pete went to his new home. Anna, her hair pulled in curls about her ears and dressed in a new gingham dress, sat stiffly on the sofa in the parlor, with Young Pete and Johnnie, scrubbed until they shone and too scared even to cry, beside her. In the kitchen three of the members of the Excelsior Club worked busily preparing supper while others straightened the curtains, moved the furniture, and rearranged the house to their liking. Pete moved about like a stranger. There was no beer in the cellar; Anna told him the ladies had refused to bring it along, and there was no railing on the back porch for him to prop his feet against.

Mrs. Walker served them with supper, the other ladies sitting at the table with Pete and Anna. Pete ate the flat-tasting food, to be polite, in silence.

It was after eight o'clock when the ladies left, and Pete had a chance of going down to his old home for the beer. When he came back Anna had a pot of cabbage ready, Young Pete was lying contentedly naked upon the floor, and Johnnie was sticking the butcher knife in the table top.

On the next Wednesday afternoon, at the regular weekly meeting of the Excelsior Club, there were an even dozen Hunkie women brought in cars by the regular members. They were dressed in the finest for the occasion and all had the look of wonderment on their broad faces. Mrs. Walker spoke briefly:

"Ladies, we have invited you here to-day as our guests for a purpose. It has always been our aim to better the conditions of the foreigners in our midst and to-day you will see the result of what can be done with a home when the proper efforts have been made. We are going to take you to the home of Mr. Pussick. Last week Mr. Pussick lived as you are living now. To-day Mr. Pussick is the proud occupant of a home equipped with modern appliances and lives under sanitary conditions. We will visit his home to-day, and I hope all of you welcome the opportunity of seeing what you too can do in your own homes. Mrs. Finney, will you take charge of the guests, please?"

Followed by the Hunkie women the members of the Excelsior Club drove to the home of Pete Pussick in New Plan Extension.

After they had knocked several times the door opened, and Pete, in undershirt and pants and with a sleepy grin on his face, greeted them.

"I workit night turn dis week and was sleeping," he explained.

They followed him into the house. During the week the home had undergone a change: the curtains were missing and the blinds were pulled down over the windows; the carpets were rolled into a corner (Pete explained with a laugh that they stuck Anna's bare feet); the furnishings were moved from the parlor, and two beds, now occupied by boarders, moved in; a half-fermented batch of beer filled the tubs in the basement; the remnants of breakfast were still on the table; a pot of cabbage boiled on the stove, and Mrs. Pussick, barefooted and with hair pulled tight in a knot at the back of her head,

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had her waist front opened for the convenience of Young Pete, who was noisily taking advantage of the opportunity.

The Hunkie women greeted Mrs. Pussick loudly and enthusiastically, while Pete offered them beer and cakes, telling them he liked the new home fine and that it didn't cost anything.

After an impromptu meeting, the members of the Excelsior Club departed hastily, leaving the Hunkie women with their former neighbors.

Pete is back at his old home in Hunkietown. He still has his job at the mill and on warm evenings sits on his porch with his bare feet on the rail and a bottle of beer on the floor beside him. To this day he cannot understand why he was given a house to live in for nothing one week and had it taken away the next.

We had a lot of fun with Pete at the mill after that. Asking him "How do you like your new home, Pete?" became a regular greeting. When we would ask him he would make a sour face, and sometimes stick out his tongue in disgust.

When the Red Cross had their regular drive that year the Excelsior Club members did the soliciting as usual. The ladies stood at the mill gate on pay day and, knowing what was coming, we had our five dollars ready. One of them stopped Pete.

"I am a member of the Excelsior Club," she said, "designated to collect funds for the Red Cross. Now, I want you to contribute as much as you can, for remember it is in a good cause. Will you give five dollars, as most of the men are doing?"

Pete looked at her for a moment and then started laughing.

"Lak hell!" he answered. "You get 'nother mans, dis time. By God, nobody gone to play joke on me again."

LOVE'S A GROWN-UP GOD *Continued from page* 138

Some men have a knack of finding the angels, when they need them. . . ."

Upstairs, after I had secured lodgings for Paul over a nearby *hofbrau,* I found Carlotta dressing for dinner.

"Your friend is living in the clouds," she declared. "One can see it in his eyes. God help him if those clouds ever drift away, and he sees this new world clearly. You must take care of that man, Tony. And I pray also that God will help him if an unkind woman should find him."

This amused me. Carlotta was never particularly enthusiastic about her own sex. She was, poor dear, one of those women who had been practically forced by other women to range herself on the side of men, partly on account of her frankness and honesty, partly on account of her prettiness. Not that every pretty woman suffers such a fate; but Carlotta's style of beauty was of that kind which seemed to act as a constant irritant to her own sex. There are women like that.

"I like your friend," she mused, cleaning her ears with a wash rag. "But he knows nothing about women." It had taken her three minutes to find that out, yet I dared not contradict her.

"Come, *liebchen,*" she said. "Ring for the cocktails. And caviare, please. Real Russian caviare. Not the kind that looks like axle grease."

I laughed at that. She was a little *gourmande* in her way, but the quality was not unattractive in her. Her tummy was plumply rounded, and she would often pat it and worry about it, chiding herself for her appetite. There was something quaint, I thought, about an adorable woman who enjoyed her food. It was disarming because it showed that she wasn't too vain.

We always had cocktails in our room. It was the cosiest hour of the day for me during those journalistic wanderings about Europe. The room always smelled sweetly of her perfume and bath salts. She had a passion for the latter, and would purchase a new variety whenever we arrived in some foreign town. While we waited for cocktails she would deftly place the studs into a clean evening shirt for me. She invariably wore very pretty underclothes, and during that intimate, before-dinner hour she would sometimes contrive a charming but diabolical immodesty as she wandered about the room. . . . We were exceedingly happy that night in Munich, and the floor waiter who brought us our cocktails lingered and beamed on us in a benign, floor-waiterly way; so much so that I had to overtip him to get rid of him. Then I thought of Paul sitting alone in his dreary little chamber above the *hofbrau* and I felt less gay. But I reminded myself that he had a happiness of his own, based upon all sorts of beautiful, intangible matters which an earthly worm like myself could not hope to understand.

Paul sent a wire to Ogilvie. And two days afterward I said good-by to Carlotta, giving her a ticket to Milan, where we had arranged to meet a week later, at the Principe é Savoia Hotel.

The journey to Switzerland was tedious, and Paul and I were glad to change at Montreux from the grimy express to the clean blue electric train which climbs over the hills to Château d'Oex.

The bus went creaking through the long, straggling village, then turned up a steep lane through pine woods. The lights of the Pension looked very cheerful as we approached them through the trees, and on the doorstep we found Ogilvie waiting for us, in his usual Norfolk jacket and old gray flannel trousers. He appeared older, and had become completely bald. He turned very red in the face when he saw us, and he embarrassed Paul by insisting on carrying our bags into the Pension.

When I flung back my shutters the following morning I looked down upon pale green, rolling pastures bathed in a light so pure and clear that it seemed unearthly. I breathed in the vital, crisp morning air, watched the herds of piebald Fribourg cattle moving gingerly across those slanting fields, and I knew that soothing peace which comes to all weary souls in Switzerland. I felt

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that nothing but goodness could emanate from a region so simple and innocent and pure. I joined Ogilvie in the garden, where we had coffee and sweet rolls and honey on a checked tablecloth, while two Swiss dogs with kind, stupid faces begged us for sugar. Ogilvie said that he liked Château d'Oex and was in no hurry to leave.

"Of course you can't work here," he said, waving the wooden honey-spoon toward the gray wall of mountains across the valley. "Those peaks overpower you. Perhaps that is why most Swiss art is negligible. You feel puny, yet you feel safe, in a way. It is a question how long an intelligent being can be content with safety. A low bourgeois ideal, according to the philosophers. But after all we've been through, don't we deserve a bit of it?"

Paul joined us later. "I'm going for a long walk," he announced. "To think things over. . . . I'm going to walk for miles." He looked down at his thin legs ruefully. He was wearing plus-fours. "Must get body as well as mind into shape—to face the world."

"To face the world," Ogilvie echoed. He looked at Paul in a worried way. "Trouble with you, my lad, is that you're too introspective. Better give that mind of yours a rest. Vegetate. Take a lesson from those cows over there." He waved his wooden spoon again.

After breakfast we went to the concierge's desk for the morning paper. A boy of about sixteen was standing there in the hall with a tennis racquet in his hand. Ogilvie said that he was a Russian. He was tall and bony, with a thin neck and a pale, wistful face. He came over to us and asked, with a stiff little bow, whether any of us would play a set of tennis with him. Ogilvie and I did not want to play, but Paul said he would, if he could find some shoes and a racquet. Ogilvie and I returned to the garden, to read our newspapers and doze in the sunshine.

At one o'clock Paul and the Russian returned, talking animatedly. The boy nodded to us, and went on his way. "He's an extraordinary chap," Paul said, joining us. "His name is Palieff—Pyotr Palieff. His people are refugees, like thousands of other Russian families. They live in a tiny place up the road which they rent from the Pension. He's asked me to tea there this afternoon."

"I know all about the Palieffs," Ogilvie said brusquely. "The old lady saw her husband shot in Moscow. She's pathetic, and a trifle mad. And there's a daughter, bedridden because of a weak heart. Are you really going to tea with them?"

"Why not?" Paul asked.

"No reason," Ogilvie said. "No reason at all why you shouldn't." He was, however, perturbed. He felt in his pocket for matches, when they were lying there on a tin table in front of him. Then the lunch gong sounded, and we trooped into the dining-room, along with an English clergyman, a freckled Scotch widow, and two very stout Swiss ladies in black alpaca.

It was after eight that night when Paul came in for supper. He ate very little. Presently Ogilvie, who had been watching him, asked: "How did you like the Palieffs?"

Paul looked up quickly.

"Oh, they—" He hesitated. "I thought they were wonderfully cheery in spite of their hardships. We had tea from a samovar, and cakes. I think the old lady is a splendid character. I'd like to put her in a book. Think of being reduced to utter poverty after fifty years of brilliant, fashionable life."

"Did you meet the daughter?" Ogilvie asked.

Paul nodded. His eyes did not meet Ogilvie's. He murmured something about a sweet child. "She was half-starved, you know, for months. While they fled from place to place in Poland and Austria."

"And still beautiful?" Ogilvie demanded.

"And still beautiful," Paul said. "Some functional trouble with the heart. A kind of anemia." He seemed anxious to evade the topic of the girl. "The Palieffs love to see people, poor souls. They flock around you like a reception committee. But they're a little sensitive about their poverty. If either of you go up there, try not to notice their humble surroundings."

Ogilvie and I looked at each other. It was strange, I thought, how swiftly Paul had ranged himself alongside that unknown family in the rôle of a protector, within the space of a few hours. After supper, when Ogilvie had gone to play billiards, Paul said: "I told the Palieffs about you, and they expect you for tea to-morrow. I won't bring Ogilvie, though." He flushed. "I think he's a bit critical of them. I'm afraid he doesn't understand Russians."

It occurred to me that he feared something in Ogilvie's essentially penetrating mind. And he knew that I, being his own age, would be more lenient.

We walked up to the Palieffs' the next afternoon. When we came to the chalet we climbed a wing of the outside stairway, and entered a large room through a rickety, glass-panelled door. The entire room was built around an enormous porcelain stove. The pine walls were bare but for a row of colored plates depicting Swiss peasants in cantonal costume, and a few very bad paintings. A gramophone was screeching "Madelon" upon a huge, unvarnished table, which also bore a samovar and a collection of chipped cups and saucers.

An old lady in black came limping toward us, leaning on a rubber-tipped cane. She progressed in a series of little swoops. She was white-haired, with a great beak of a nose, and there were many moles upon her sallow cheeks. She had a kind smile, full of large yellow teeth. She spoke to us in good but foreign English, making a despairing motion of apology for the disorder of the room. And almost immediately she insisted that we go into the next room, to see Natia.

I saw that the whole Palieff household revolved about Natia. Pyotr, entering with an atrocious water-color of an Alpine sunset, still wet from painting, said: "Come in and see Natia." And there was a small, sturdy brother who paused long enough in his blowing of a horrible tin horn to shout: "Yes. Come in and see Natia!"

We passed through another door, into a smaller room. And after that I paid little attention to my surroundings. In an instant I was absorbed by that fragile yet paradoxically vivid little creature, lying on a couch with a faded pink counterpane thrown over her knees, upon which she balanced a water-color block. They had a passion for water-colors, those strange Palieffs.

Natia was only eighteen when I met her on that April afternoon. Her back was turned to the window, and the slanting afternoon sun fell in dusty

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golden bars upon her neat, dark head. It was such a proud little head, with the hair arranged in so sleek and grown-up a fashion that it hurt you—because it was so absurdly young, and pretending to be so very, very mature. The long, slender, childish throat gave the game away. Her face was extraordinarily sweet and innocent, as if she had always been sheltered from the horrors of the world, although she had been through more than her share of them. Her black, gleaming hair framed her cheeks closely, accentuating their milky pallor. Her features weren't perfect, by any means. Her curved little nose was a shade too short, for one thing, and there were freckles on her cheeks, just below her candid brown eyes. Her childish body encased in that dismal quilt revealed that she was tall, and almost painfully slender. To me she was like some fragrant Spring flower, early yet unafraid.

I glanced over her shoulder at her painting, and discovered an obese four-legged creature wallowing in vivid green grass. She looked up at me, her eyes narrowed, and her nose crinkled with sudden mirth at my expression.

"It is meant to be a cow," she said, "if you must know the truth."

She had a low, gentle voice which was rich in timbre, Russian in its rising, plaintive inflection at the end of a sentence. Little Fyodr cried: "Natia is always painting cows. Fat, stupid, Swiss cows, like Frau Hesslinger who comes every month for the rent."

We all laughed, and were at once at ease. And Fyodr blew madly upon his tin horn as if to celebrate his own wit. Madame Palieff, aided by Pyotr, brought in the tea things. I remember that we had cakes full of carroway seeds, which I detest because I do not like using toothpicks. I helped the old lady to pass the cups, but Paul did not stir from beside Natia. He sat there entranced, looking so completely at home that one might have imagined he'd been there all his life. That fragile little girl, so tender yet so gay in spite of her handicap, must have appeared to him as a symbol of all the wrongs which war can inflict upon an innocent and inarticulate humanity. That is the danger of idealists: they live for symbols, and readily interpret them in each character they meet and love. For there was no use dodging the issue any longer, I told myself. Within twenty-four hours Paul had become exaltedly in love with his little symbol.

Apart from her tenuous beauty, I had to admit, she was adorably human and amusing. When little Fyodr brought her tea, she said, screwing up her nose: "Fyodr, you do not smell nice. I know you didn't wash to-day." Fyodr hung his head guiltily. And his mother looked ashamed, too, because there were strangers present, although she rushed to his defence. "Poor little boy. He hates the cold, hard Swiss water. And lazy Pyotr will not rise in time to start the boiler. In Moscow my boys had running hot water in their room."

"While I," Natia exclaimed, "was in a boarding school, washing in icy water! We are funny women, we Russians, are we not, Mamma? We spoil our men, and that is why all the practical qualities are on our side——"

"They didn't do much good when the revolution came, did they?" Pyotr chimed in. Whereupon Madame Palieff burst into tears. We all had to stop drinking tea until she had been petted and calmed, and until Pyotr had searched the chalet for a handkerchief. Then she told us of the death of her husband, the general; of the flight into Poland; the poverty and squalor of Warsaw; the selling of the family jewels. And, finally, the breaking down of Natia's health, and the weary journey through Austria to the semi-happy ending of Switzerland. As soon as she had finished she rose, beckoning to me. We went into the next room, followed by the two boys, leaving Paul and Natia alone together.

She asked me a number of questions about Paul. About his family, his war record, his future career. I tried to be circumspect. I gave him an excellent character, and left his future vague—which it was. She seemed disappointed, and kept shaking her head as she pottered about her samovar and saucers. "Young men must do great things," she said. "This is no age to sit back and dream. 'The father plants the tree, the son enjoys its shade,' the Chinese say. But that is no longer possible." She cackled, so shrilly that I jumped. "Pyotr," she added, "is going to be a famous painter,"—just as one might announce that a boy was destined to become a plumber or a bricklayer.

Presently Paul joined us, closing the door softly behind him. Madame Palieff looked at him sharply. His face was radiant. Pyotr then produced a bottle of old yellow vodka with a straw floating in it. We drank a glass to Madame Palieff's health, and to the leader of the White Army.

"When Fyodr is grown up," the old lady said, cheered by her alcohol, "we will all go back to our country place near Moscow. We had nearly a thousand acres. Sometimes we had forty guests staying with us. . . ." We heard Natia calling from the next room, and Paul jumped up involuntarily; then sat down flushing. Fyodr went in to see Natia, and the old lady eyed Paul narrowly.

"Is your estate in England?" she asked. Paul laughed, and said that his father's small place in Sussex had been sold, to cover taxes. Fyodr then returned with the announcement that Natia wanted Paul and me to come for supper on Sunday evening. She was allowed to get up for two hours every week. Madame Palieff at once became irritated. She was looking at me and frowning. I knew then that she feared me, and I believe that she disliked Latins, being one of those Russians who preferred the Anglo-Saxon temperament. They are always veering in their sympathies, these Russian souls, like a compass needle fluctuating between northern sanity and southern emotion; between eastern mysticism and western reality. "Oh, dear, oh, dear," she wailed. "If I can manage to prepare supper for so many——"

I put her at her ease, using Ogilvie as my excuse. I did not think the two of us could desert him Sunday night. Paul gave me a grateful look, and the old lady appeared relieved. Fyodr took up his tin horn again, and conversation became impossible. "He looks just like his father, the general," Madame Palieff screeched above the din. "He came late—a great surprise to both of us."

On our way home Paul was silent, lost in thought, tapping the pine trunks with his alpenstock. It occurred to me that an infirmity such as Natia's, with only a pitiful fragility as its severest manifestation, could be very picturesque. It might even enhance her value in the eyes of a romantic. Even now Paul was asking me where, in the village, one could buy flowers. . . .

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A week drifted by. Paul spent most of his time at the Palieff chalet, while Ogilvie and I took long walks. We paced that valley together until we knew every timbered village, every waterfall, every covered bridge. One afternoon when we were returning from Gruyère he blurted out: "Is Paul getting involved up there?" And he jerked his thumb toward the ridge of pines above the Pension Flora.

"Anything is possible with a man like Paul," I said. "Moles like ourselves, with our noses to the ground, can't judge him."

He puffed at his pipe furiously.

"D'you mean he's a genius?"

"Not in the ordinary meaning. But if you define genius as an ability to see beyond the average mortal's vision, why, yes. One willing to risk everything on a turn of the wheel. One with a sense of——"

"—Of prophecy," he said. "I know what you mean. Listening to the unseen. . . . Of course they get into messes, those people. Far more deeply than ourselves. They suffer. But who shall say that they are not superior to us, who must have everything explained to us before we act?"

I said: "Supposing he marries her. What then?"

He was not surprised at the question, and I saw that I had only voiced the inevitable. "A bedridden little girl," he mused. "A poetic idea. One thinks of Browning. . . . But let us examine its implications. Paul is embracing an unknown quantity, half-child, half-woman. She has never lived, as others of her age. No dances, no admirers, no friends except her own adoring family. How can she be sure of herself, and of Paul? And mightn't she get well after a time?"

"You can dismiss that idea," I told him: "The doctors, according to Paul, say that she will always be delicate. The heart weakness is functional, though —not organic. So she's in no grave danger."

He made little clicking sounds with his tongue, and we walked on in silence.

When we reached the Pension, Ogilvie went upstairs for his tea. He brewed it in his bedroom, because the Pension charged three francs for it. The concierge came and handed me a note, addressed in a unique, square little handwriting which I had never seen.

"Dear Count Jenesta"—I read—"The family have gone to Montreux with Paul this afternoon. I would like very much to see you about something important if you do not mind the climb up here. Yours very sincerely, Natia Palieff."

It was after five. I hurried up the steep path, and at the chalet I found Natia alone in the little back room. The Palieffs had no servants—only an old Swiss woman with a goitre like a turkey gobbler, who came for an hour daily to clean the house. Natia greeted me with a sweet but grave smile. I saw that she was in a dignified and grown-up mood, and I tried to take my cue from her. For a time we played a game of make-believe, while she patted the nape of her neck, glanced at herself in a small mirror, and complained about the dulness of Château d'Oex.

All at once she discarded her little pose—which she accomplished very well, by the way, although all her chit-chat must have been obtained from newspapers and magazines—and said: "A strange thing has happened since I last saw you. . . ." She plucked nervously at the faded pink quilt upon her knees, and her face became flushed. Then she drew a deep breath, and said in a small, weak voice: "Your friend has done me a great honor. He has asked me to marry him—there, I've said it, thank goodness! I hope you will understand why I must talk with you about this. I have nobody else. Pyotr is very young, and full of terribly important opinions which he changes from day to day. And Mamma—you know Mamma. She is getting old, and when she becomes excited it is bad for her health. You see, Count Jenesta——"

"Tony, please," I interrupted.

"Tony, then. . . . I am most greatly touched by what Paul has done. He is a very noble man. A sweet man." I smiled at the quaint phrasing. "If I were well, I would not hesitate," she continued. "But I am not. I am delicate, and nobody knows how and when I shall get strong. I have told all that to Paul, again and again, but he will not listen. He only says that he would like to take care of me, forever and ever. That is very beautiful, I think. But is it right or fair? Could I place such a responsibility on him, even if he demands it?"

I believe that I flung out my arms in despair. I am prone to become Latin and dramatic whenever my sense of logic is outraged. "But my dear little girl!" I said. "I realize all this. I haven't been blind for the past week. Yet what earthly use is there in seeking my advice on such an ethical problem? Don't you see the position in which you put me? Paul happens to be my very good friend, and I am devoted to him in my own peculiar, selfish way. How can I give you advice?"

She bit her lip. "Then you don't approve——"

My head was spinning. All my sense of the fitness of things rebelled at my position. Frankness was all very well, but there was a limit to it if one had any regard for subtlety. Damn these Russians, I told myself. And I felt as if I were a character in a Chekhov play. . . . Yet looking at Natia's young, earnest face I couldn't possibly be angry with her. She was so palpably sincere. All I could say was: "It is your own heart, Natia, that will give you the real answer to Paul. My approval is neither here nor there. When a man has a good friend, he wants him to be happy, that is all. He hasn't discussed you with me, therefore how can I——"

"My heart," she repeated softly. She sighed. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, what do I know about love? Ever since I grew up I have been struggling for life, it seems to me. I have had no time for love. How can I tell whether I am capable of it, when I have only read about it in books? I would give Paul every bit of my affection and loyalty and friendship, for the whole of my life. Of that I am sure. It is easy to promise because he is so fine——"

She paused; then asked me an amazing question.

"Tell me, honestly. Have I no right to marry him unless I am sure that I can fall in love with him? I mean really fall in love—like other girls? I imagine love of that kind—" She flushed deeply, "—goes with health and strength. . . ." She covered her face with her pale little hands, and I saw how delicately the blue veins were etched upon them. "I shouldn't talk like this. Mamma would be horrified. . . . But I am so tired of being alone with my thoughts.

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They go around and around, and they have no answers."

"Natia," I said. "As long as you are fair and honest like this, there will be no danger for you and Paul. I have learned that much about life."

She was very near to tears.

"I suppose it is natural that you should not be too encouraging. I imagine men cling together even more loyally than girls. But I will tell you something I had not meant to tell you, and you must promise always to remember it. If I marry Paul it will not be for myself alone—merely to find a safe home. Mamma would like that, I am sure, but I cannot think of it in that way. I swear to you, Tony, I would rather die than—than use Paul. I would marry him for two reasons. Because I think he is the best and goodest man in all the world, and because—" She hesitated, and said slowly and carefully: "—I am actually frightened for him if I refuse him. That sounds conceited, I know, but I do not mean it in that way, I promise you. I feel that it is almost a duty, if you can see what I mean. He needs so very, very badly an anchor. And," she concluded pitifully, "if I am not an anchor, what else am I?"

I knew only too clearly what she meant. And I marvelled that she grasped within so short a space of time the essential dangers of Paul's character, and his capacity for a deadly, set purpose wherever his ideals were concerned.

"I know him quite well now," she added. "We have had many long talks. When he came here that first day he seemed to me to be a lost soul. His eyes were like a dog's, looking for its master. He told me terrible things about the War, and what he had seen and been through. And then, all at once, that lost soul looks for a safe harbor, and what does it choose? Me! Poor, wretched, delicate Natia Palieff. Isn't that absurd? Isn't it mad? Of course it is. But I said to God, when I made my prayers: Oh, Lord, who am I, a little girl of no importance, to deny him that place of rest if it will save him from despair, and make him happy? And that is God's truth."

She crossed herself, and looked up at me. All the time she had been talking she had kept her eyes down. I saw now that they were brimming with tears. "That is how I care for him," she murmured. "Is that love?"

If it wasn't, I told myself—and for some reason I felt thoroughly ashamed—then there was no such thing as sacred love in this world. And suddenly I understood all that the child was trying to tell me. That her love for Paul was partly spiritual, partly maternal—the oldest love of all; and that she was too remote from everyday life, too inexperienced, to be able to promise anything more.

"You know," she said eagerly, "I have a strange picture of the War. Being in bed so much, I have plenty of time to think. And I always think in pictures, I do not know why. I see that the War has left a long black shadow across the face of the earth, and that there are many, many of us still caught in that shadow, struggling to reach the sunshine. Paul and I are caught in that way, and perhaps together we might help each other towards the sun. A curious idea, is it not? But then I have lots of curious ideas." And she added inconsequentially, in one of her swift reversions to childhood: "I am a funny girl, am I not?"

"It is a very lovely idea," I said. "But there's one thing I must tell you. Paul idealizes you. You can make him supremely happy if you want to, and if you believe in that divine law of compensation in which he believes. He's found in you everything that he desires. A man like Paul does not take marriage lightly. . . . Let him continue, always, to feel that way about you. God knows, I haven't any right to preach to you, because I am a worldly fellow, principally occupied with the important task of preserving my own hide, and furthering my own ends. But I know Paul. He is the antithesis of myself. And I do know that if you undertake this great venture you must never, never do anything which could destroy the ideals he has built around you. He'd die, Natia, along with the death of those ideals. Your task is perfectly clear, in return for his love and protection. Do you think you're capable of it?"

After a moment's silence she said: "I believe I am. But I cannot help being a little frightened at so great a change in my life. And yet I know that my fears are only a part of my imagination, my own silly thoughts. I know that after Mamma has gone—for she surely has only a few more years—I will have some one who will always love me. You read about that in books, but I imagine that very few girls have it actually. Some one *always* to love me. It is a wonderful feeling."

Just before I left her I did something which surprised myself. I walked over to her, and bent down, and kissed her cheek. I could not help doing it. "You've seen the beginning of this, Tony," she said. "Promise to help us—if we ever need you."

"I promise," I told her. And just then we heard Fyodr's tin horn, away down the hillside, blowing madly as usual.

I hadn't seen Paul for twelve hours. He followed the Palieffs up from Montreux by a later train and arrived at the Flora after supper, laden with bundles. "A drum for Fyodr," he explained, "and a Windsor and Newton set of colors for Pyotr. Lace handkerchiefs for Natia. Take a look at them. Do you think they're half-way decent? I don't know anything about such things."

After he'd shown me the presents he glanced nervously around the crowded little salon where I had been sitting, reading a Milan time table.

He tugged at my arm, like an excited terrier. "Let's clear out. I must talk with you—somewhere. Let's run down to the *Baren*."

We walked down the hill, under the clear, polished stars, to the village. There was a carved golden bear hanging under an electric light outside the inn. We went down some steps into the wine room, which was filled with peasants in black clothes seated at pine tables. We sat down, and ordered beer from the waitress.

"Tony," Paul said. "Madame Palieff's dying. It's written in her eyes. She's very quiet about it, like most old people with wisdom. Pyotr knows she's dying, and so does Natia. Russians know everything about life except the actual task of living." He gulped down half his beer, and wiped his brow with a cheap, gaudy handkerchief. "The old lady's dying," he repeated. "Pyotr and Fyodr will be thrown on the streets, and Natia—well, Natia. . . . You see, Old Man, she's going to marry me."

I tried to interrupt, but he raised his hand.

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"Listen to me. For once I know what I'm doing. You'll say that Natia is bedridden and helpless. Very well. Two things can happen. She will get better, or stay the same. She will never be in serious danger if she's properly taken care of. That's why I really went to Montreux to-day—to look up the last doctor who saw her. Madame Palieff let his name slip out. If she does get better I'll have the supreme reward of my life. If she doesn't, then I'll have my job, keeping her cheery—" His eyes held that fantastic light I had seen in Munich. "You remember, I told you that ever since they freed me from Radnitz I've wanted to accomplish something, to prove my faith. It's an awful feeling to have faith, and to have no outlet for it——"

"Faith in what?" I asked.

"You know. The dynamic force. God, and destiny, and all the rest of it. There are far too few gestures of faith nowadays. That's why our mean, modern little souls shrivel up when we're still young. If a chap loses the spirit of adventure, which needs faith, he loses the spirit of God. . . ."

I said nothing. You couldn't fool with Paul in one of his exalted states. It would be comparable to shouting in the midst of an organ solo in some vast, dim cathedral. "Besides," he added quickly, "all that's beyond the point. I'm in love, you see."

"Where will you take her?" I asked.

"To England. To one of those quiet corners in Cotswolds I told you about. Sheep pastures, and duck ponds, and quiet gray villages. The climate won't hurt her. I spoke to the doctor about that. He was a blunt fellow. 'Science or climate can't affect her,' he said." He darted a swift, shy look at me. "Of course, you know, it wouldn't be like other marriages necessarily. It might turn out a spiritual sort of thing entirely. But I love her, I think, as much as any man can love a woman. Somehow I wanted you to know all this, because you've been in on it from the start. I suppose I'd wait for years and years, hoping. . . ."

It all sounded very strange and pitiful and brave to me. The only thing to do, because I knew that Paul had his unseen host of voices back of him, was to bring matters down to earth again. So I announced: "I saw Natia this afternoon."

He put down his beer and stared at me. His hands gripped the table and his knuckles turned white.

"What did you talk about?"

"You."

"Reach any conclusions?"

"I gave her no advice, if that's what you mean. She had already made up her mind, and the state of her own heart. I wish you all the luck in the world, Paul."

"Thank God," he said. "Thank God. If you knew what this meant to me, Old Man. If you knew . . ." He became speechless, gripping my hand.

I had wired Carlotta that I would arrive at eight. But I had forgotten that the new summer time tables were in effect, and my train reached Milan shortly after six. I couldn't find Carlotta at the Principe, and needing a drink after that long, hot journey I took a taxi into town—to Cova's restaurant. When I'd had my whisky at the bar I glanced into the dining-room. They had hired an American jazz band for a tea dance, and the floor was crowded with the pretty, plump dark little women you see in Milan, and the kind of sleek, pale young men who frequent such afternoon affairs. Presently I discovered Carlotta. She was dancing with a stocky, bald fellow with one of those bland Nordic countenances which always irritate me. She did not see me, for she was talking with a great deal of animation as she danced. She looked extremely pretty in a cherry-colored dress which I had not seen before.

I returned to the bar and had two more whiskies. Then I walked back to the Principe, and sat in the lounge. She came in about ten minutes later. She was suprised to see me, for it wasn't eight o'clock yet, and she seemed agitated.

"I'm tired," she said. "I've been out all day long. Let us go upstairs and talk."

"Where have you been, Carlotta?" I asked her.

She looked puzzled.

"When—just now?"

I nodded.

"At the Rinascente—shopping."

"I thought they closed at six."

"Oh—then I had to go to the Post Office."

"What did you buy at the Rinascente?"

"You're so queer, Tony," she said. And she laughed. "I bought a new dress—this one, and a great many little odds and ends. I am very short of money. Could you give me something to pay the bill? They'll be here this evening with it."

I took out my pocket book and gave her a five-thousand-lira note. It was all I had—until next pay day. She stared at it, and her voice trembled. "This is far too much, Tony."

"Not at all," I said, "for services rendered."

"I don't know what you mean," she said, turning pale. But she did know, for she took a handkerchief from her purse and began to snuffle in it. I felt weary and miserable, and fed up with everything. I couldn't discuss the situation with her, and I said nothing. Pretty soon she rose from the sofa where we were sitting, and her shoulders had a tired droop to them.

"Am I to leave you now, Tony?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"As you like. There is an extra room in my apartment. Please don't hurry away on my account. I won't trouble you."

She burst into tears, there in the middle of the hotel lounge. A fat man near us stared at her. "I wouldn't go near your apartment," she cried. "I think you are beastly. You owe me an explanation."

"Oh, Carlotta," I said wearily. "Must I remind you that both of us always disliked lies. We agreed that anything was better than deception."

Then she left me. She had her little nose in the air as she walked out of the Principe, and she gave a defiant flip to the gray furs around her shoulders. A feeling of elation seized me; that pungent male feeling of triumph over a woman who has failed to play fair. As long as the eternal warfare existed between the two sexes, I thought, men would always have that sadistic wave of pleasure upon such occasions. And yet I did not hate her. I only thought it was a terrible pity that she should disappoint me. While I tried to eat my dinner I thought of Paul and Natia; and I decided that if ever she should disappoint Paul in that fashion I would feel very much like killing her. After

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dinner I walked across town to my own apartment. There was no sign of Carlotta, and no note from her. She was not the kind who would write. . . .

Part Two

A year or two passed pleasantly enough for me. I worked hard for my Milan newspaper, which had by now been converted to Fascism. My employer believed in guessing the public trend of opinion in advance, and advocating that trend with a sledge-hammer. Opportunism was his motto. In Florence my mother embraced Fascism—it was quite smart and exclusive then—and she was greatly pleased when some of my blackshirt friends riddled a little socialist green-grocer with bullets on May Day. She and her women friends had a great deal of fun planning the salvation of our beloved Italy. They were far more bloodthirsty than any male member of the *Risorgimento,* and I thought it lucky that their tongues were their only weapons.

Finally, after I'd been in Florence three years, I decided to take a holiday. I'd had letters from Paul and Ogilvie, and they wanted me to come and see them. In the middle of December I crossed London from Victoria to Paddington Station. Dear, dreary old Paddington like a faded cathedral under its vaulted roof of smoky, blackened glass; the quiet platforms veiled in a drifting fog; the orderly porters ushering one to the train, like vestrymen indicating a pew. I walked forward, and looked at the shining green-and-brass locomotive. I read the name over the driving-wheels, and I could have shouted for sheer, sentimental joy—for it was still the Lady of Quality, and she looked younger than ever, without a wrinkle upon her. . . . The train glided out into the fogbound countryside. Its motion was smooth, steady, British. We slid through Twyford and Slough in a long whisper and a flash of lanterns. They were still making biscuits in Reading. And then the spires of Oxford crept to the horizon, like gentle gray ghosts out of the past.

I found Ogilvie seated before his open fire, reading the Satyricon.

"Still Petronius," I laughed, as we shook hands.

"I wish the blighter lived to-day," he sighed. "He'd find ample material for satire in the current spectacle."

He offered me whisky, and we settled down to chat. Not that I did much talking. One waited upon Ogilvie in conversation—for him to ripen, so to speak. He stuffed his pipe with tobacco from an old Chinese jar. "What have you been up to?" he grunted.

I told him. Florence. Fascism. My newspaper work.

"You're on your way to stay with Paul?"

I nodded.

"I'm a little afraid, Ogilvie. You know how I felt about the marriage. And one never could gather anything from his infantile letters."

"There's nothing to be afraid about," he said. "The marriage has done a splendid thing for him. It has turned him definitely into a writer. It has formed his style, and his writing personality, don't you see? He writes in an exquisitely tender way. A sort of bucolic, William Morris effect, quite out of keeping with the din and jazz and pornography of to-day. The critics gave his first book a shout of welcome. . . . Oh, yes, he's found himself out there in the Cotswolds, with that delicate child of a wife. They live near a village called Crow's Nest, about ten miles from Chipping Norton. Paul enjoys the quietude of it. He's one of those half-tones. You can see people in colors, you know, if you stop to think about it. Paul is all grays—a multiplicity of undertone. Like a Whistler. . . ."

"Are they happy?" I asked.

"You'll see," he said. "You'll see. I can't describe it. There's a halo about their house, an aura. . . . I didn't know that sort of thing existed nowadays. He'll be overjoyed to have you with him, nevertheless. It is a lonely country up there, with only a few farmers about. I think that he's hard put to it for male companionship, during those long hours while Natia rests."

"He's at heart a man's man," I said. "In spite of his reticence and spirituality. The true Anglo-Saxon."

"Different from you—eh?" he said, and gave me a dig in the ribs as he approached with the decanter. "I know all about you, you young devil."

"We won't talk about that," I said. After three years I still couldn't go near the Principe in Milan. But Ogilvie, I knew, was incapable of understanding that.

In the crisp, wintry sunset the Cotswold train meandered among the hills, leaving the Thames valley behind, and emerged to an upland country. A land of undulating sheepdowns criss-crossed by walls of gray stone; of birchwood knolls outlined against a healthy crimson sky; of sedate villages bearing fragrant names such as Windrush, and Wychwood, and Bourton-on-the-Water. We came at last to a huddle of old gray houses in a deep green pocket between the hills. And Paul was standing at the station gate as I gave up my ticket.

Natia was resting, he said, when we arrived at the long, rambling timbered house. Sitting there in the twilight, with the diamond-paned windows of the drawing-room softly luminous against a violet dusk, I felt the peace of that rugged countryside stealing over me. And looking at Paul, lolling in an armchair, his slippered feet upon a brick hearth, I had no fears for him. He was heavier, less quick and nervous in his movements. He was a calm, contented man. I was glad, because I had seen too many wretched people since the War had ended. All Europe had seemed unhappy. But coming to Paul's house was like a journey into the past, to the repose of an earlier age innocent of such evils as rapid transit, night life, and neurasthenia.

I was curious about Natia, but refrained from asking questions, and Paul offered no information beyond the fact that she would join us for dinner. We talked of books and politics. After a while he accompanied me to my bedroom, a chaste and cold little chamber under the eaves. It had an uncompromising pitcher of white porcelain, which made me shiver when I considered my morning ablutions. It was all very pure and monastic. The shutters rattled in the evening wind as I closed them, and Paul, standing beside me, said with a laugh: "Heavens, Old Man, you don't want to be all sealed up in here, do you?"

"As a Latin," I apologized, "I prefer bodily warmth to hygiene. It's a dirty habit of ours."

A distant clock chimed seven as I closed the shutters. An elderly maid appeared with a tin of hot water, her crisp linen rustling. I was at the moment keenly sensitive to impressions. I was trying to absorb the spirit of the house, its atmosphere of ordered har-

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mony. After Paul had gone I heard voices in a room below me, and the scuffle of a dog on the steep, slippery stairs.

After I had changed into a dinner coat I went down, to find Natia on a chaise longue before the living-room fire. She extended both her hands like an old friend, and she had that same radiant smile which I had always remembered from Château d'Oex. The passage of a few years had wrought certain changes in her, and for a moment I was surprised at these changes, for like most people I have the unconscious habit of expecting my acquaintances to appear, regardless of time, exactly as I remember them.

I saw now that Natia was a remarkably lovely woman. She had, under Paul's incessant care, managed to become a trifle plumper, so that she had lost some of that appearance of almost desperate fragility. She still gave the impression of being tall, and her complexion had retained its pallor, its faintly violet shadowing under the dark eyes, and the delicately etched lines of her cheekbones. It seemed to me that the years had accentuated every one of her patrician qualities: the delicacy of her coloring, the little curving nostrils of her short nose, the essentially proud poise of her sleek, dark head upon a very slender white throat. I held her two hands, and said: "Let me look at you, Natia. Why, you are prettier than ever!"

A speech of that kind came naturally enough from my lips, but I think it confused her a little. She laughed in an embarrassed, childish way and said in her sweet, precise Russian voice: "I still have my freckles, Tony. Is it not absurd, when I am out of doors so very, very little?"

"I like your freckles," I told her. "They give that warm touch of humor, which every pretty face needs."

"Oh dear, oh dear," she laughed, and addressed a dog sitting at her feet. "Listen to him, Humphrey. Listen to the gay bachelor from Italy. He should not have been asked down here, should he? He is too worldly and quick at pretty speeches for simple people like ourselves." Turning to me, she added: "We do not get much excitement here, you know. There have been only three great events during the winter." She counted them on her fingers. "The church bazaar for the local branch of the British Legion. And then Humphrey becoming a father, although it was inadvertent and he wasn't at all impressed by it. And, finally, your own arrival here."

"I'm flattered to be mentioned among such distinguished events," I said. She laughed gaily, and I saw that she was in fine spirits. She then introduced me to Humphrey, who was a small, steel-gray Cairn terrier. She asked me to put him on her lap for her. He was heavy, and it was not good for her heart to lift him. As I held him up to her, with all his paws waving, her face crumpled up into that divine tenderness which comes over so many childless women when they speak to their dogs.

"It is very quiet here," Natia repeated. "I wonder how long you will stand it—a gay creature like you."

"I am sick of the world at present," I told her. "It's a dreadful place. Full of noise and filth, and jealousies and deceits. I have been working for a big newspaper, which is somewhat bad for one's illusions, my dear Natia."

Natia sighed. "It is strange how we always most admire the lives of other people. To me, lying here, your one or two letters sounded as if your life was brilliant and exciting."

"Yet your own life appears to agree with you," I said. She enjoyed this, for she patted the pretty nape of her neck in a familiar and charming gesture which I recalled from the past. She was wearing a very simple evening gown of mauve chiffon, with a single silver flower at her waist. It had the tints and shades of an orchid. She looked, as she sat there, like some graceful etching by one of the Parisians—Driant, or perhaps Icart. But the simplicity of the dress did not deceive me; and it occurred to me as a passing thought that Paul must be lavishing a more than generous sum upon her clothes. Just then he entered the room, and looked at her with one of those quick, adoring glances which guests are not supposed to observe. He drew me aside and whispered: "She's looking splendidly, isn't she? I haven't seen her so well for weeks."

After we had all taken a glass of sherry we moved into the dining-room. Natia, preceding us, had a slow, languid walk that suddenly struck me as a foreign note in that sturdy British household. The setting of the table, the food, were both perfect, although Natia ate little after the consommé had been served. The middle-aged maid, referred to as Wentworth, waited upon us. Her countenance was like a dried apple, both in texture and expression.

During dinner Paul talked to me about the surrounding countryside. "What I'm trying to do," he said, warming up to his subject, "is to instil into myself some of William Morris's love for the land. This region, you know, has been neglected as far as contemporary writing is concerned." He described in detail the fruits of his work, so far. And then a curious thing happened. In a pause, between his descriptions of the country, he said: "Natia helps me, too. She does an hour of typing for me every morning when she's strong enough." But Natia interrupted, with a barely perceptible frown: "Darling, why do you qualify it? I have not missed a morning for the last month." Her voice had that plaintive Russian timbre. "Haven't you even noticed it?"

There was a brief and awkward pause, until Paul replied hurriedly: "Of course I've noticed it, dear. You have been wonderful about helping me lately." Then, turning to me, he went on: "We have a regular routine here. In the morning I walk, pottering about for local color. You know the type of outing. Talking to farmers; taking notes. You obtain some priceless things. . . . Only yesterday an old chap said to me: ' 'Twon't be Spring till you can plant your foot on twelve daisies.' Think of the unconscious, pure poetry in that statement. . . . In the afternoons Natia and I take a short drive in the car."

Although he had already forgotten the incident concerning Natia's help, I saw that she had not. She was still frowning a little to herself, as if she had not been satisfied with his reply. She was toying with some idea, unfathomable to me, which did not please her. That was the only jarring note in an otherwise perfect evening. For the rest of the time I marvelled at the harmony existing between those two. They had mutually adjusted their lives; he to her health, she to his work. As for the relationship between them, I saw it as a quiet and affectionate friendship, aided

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and abetted by a charming courtesy. I felt that they were different from the average couple. The very respect which they showed each other, that perfection and evenness of manner, all pointed to an existence upon an even tempo, without great heights or depths. Without any great degree of passion. Not that the essential base of marriage was non-existent. It was merely subordinate, relegated possibly to the sphere of the unimportant, the negligible. My native intuition told me this. I had only to look into the calm, candid eyes of Natia to confirm it. She was still, to my mind, half a child.

As for Paul, there was beauty in everything he did in his wife's presence. A subdued and tender beauty which I, battering about a harsh world, had never before encountered. I had never seen a man waiting upon a woman, and I was amazed that it could be done with such dignity. But now, seeing Paul stoop to pick up a ball of wool Natia had dropped, touching her shoulder as he passed her, asking after her appetite, accompanying her upstairs with his arm around her shoulders when she retired early, now I saw all these little acts performed easily and courteously, without fuss or sentimentality. It amounted to a constant awareness of her every movement. One might have said that he was a professional nurse, except for the cloud of love in his eyes when they encountered hers. . . .

Waiting for Paul to return from Natia's room, I pondered over the injustice of so lovely a personality being handicapped physically throughout her life. It was an invisible handicap, which perhaps rendered it even harder to bear. I saw now that Natia had changed; matured. There were depths to her which somehow evaded my powers of analysis. The only way I can elucidate the thought is to say that I had a feeling about her, as one has about certain women, that she had some private little room of thought, all her own, which I could never attain. It wasn't a lack of candor. It was something which life itself had forced upon her. And I was quite sure that Paul hadn't attained that private room, for all his ministrations and tenderness. I doubt whether he suspected its existence. . . .

When he came downstairs again I said: "I was thinking of Natia. She is so quiet, and so fine. How have the years passed, and how is her health coming along? You don't mind my asking?"

He settled himself in an armchair, raised his feet on a stool before the fire, and lighted his pipe. He had that air of well-being which few Englishmen refrain from assuming when a room is finally cleared of women. It has nothing to do with being in love or not being in love. It is merely an ancient instinct.

"I don't believe she will ever be much better," he said cautiously. "There's always the heart, you see. Trenholm, the London specialist, visits her every six months. And meanwhile we have our local man, Dorsey, in to see her once a week. There has been some improvement; the anemia is ever so much better. But the heart won't stand any taxing. Her mother's death a year ago was a great shock to her. The old lady died quite happy, though, down at Cannes. Her sons are at school now in Bournemouth."

"And you, of course, pay for them," I said.

He moved uncomfortably in his chair.

"One does what one can, Old Man. I'd do anything for Natia. Her activities will always be limited. I face that fact now, squarely. Not that I'm complaining, mind you. I'm a damned lucky fellow, really." And he added softly, the smile leaving his face: "There cannot be children, though. . . ." He patted Humphrey at his feet, pulling his soft, limp ears. "We must be content with you, mustn't we, old chap?" Humphrey yawned, and licked his hand.

"I hope," I repeated, "that I haven't been too inquisitive."

"Heavens, no. Friends are friends." He rose. "Shall we turn in? Hit the hay, as Binkers, the Rhodes man, used to say?" He placed a hand on my shoulder. "Natural that you should want to get the lie of the land. . . . I'll put the dog out now. To-morrow I'll read you my new manuscript. I'm frightfully keen to have your ideas. I want your practical knowledge, concerning the presentation of the thing. I want it to be vivid enough for a fairly large public, without spoiling the touch. You see, I've lived out of the world so long that I don't know much about the public, although they were very kind to my first effort."

In the morning he read his manuscript to me, and I sat spellbound. I hadn't known that prose so limpidly exquisite, so courtly, still existed. It was like the fragrant breath of some old English garden perfectly maintained, yet the gates of which had been locked for a century from the outer world. I had fears that it might be lost upon a public hungry for sensation, but I knew that I would never dare alter a word of it. The only possibility would be to intensify it, here and there, with a larger quantity of human drama, if I could find suitable material. I saw that there was plenty of work ahead for me. "We'll go over the territory," I said, "until I've absorbed my own share of it. As for your prose, it is perfect."

We then put on our coats and went outdoors. It was a blustery morning with a high clear sky, a roof of robin's-egg blue which suited that frank, open country. We walked up a bleached and curving road between coverts of oak and hazel, and half-frozen water meadows, and we came to the very crest of the valley. We looked down upon mile after mile of rolling sheepdown, varying in pastel tints from chrome yellow to russet, traversed by that endless pattern of low stone walls.

"Do you wonder I'm keen on this?" he exclaimed. "Do you realize what the War, and finding Natia, did for me? It solved my life. Eternal happiness and peace. I've become rooted to all this, and part of it. Ogilvie's suggestion, that Natia and I travel a bit if she became better, appalled me. Wandering from hotel to hotel seems so footless compared with the deep, sound realities all around us here. After all, the true dynamic force in life is nature. You can't get away from that. She's always changing, yet always permanent. Take that superb oak over there. Green in summer, yellow in the autumn, naked in winter. Then all green again. The most absorbing drama in the world—yet the most reliable. It gives one always a confidence in God."

We went on to Crow's Nest. It was a windswept, scrubbed-looking little town of gray houses and clean, narrow streets. In the middle of it we came to a market-place, where two highroads crossed beside a grass common and a weatherbeaten horse trough. We called at the post-office, and we purchased a brace of pheasant at the market. In

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Jester's Lane we ran into Doctor Dorsey, a stocky, horsey little Irishman with a scarlet countenance and a cockatoo's crest of white hair. He stared at me fixedly while Paul talked to him, as if, I thought, he were deciding whether I might be in some way useful to him. He had keen, glacial blue eyes. And the moment Paul stepped across the lane to speak to a clergyman dismounting from his bicycle, Dorsey said to me hurriedly: "I hear you're a good pal of Paul's. He's talked enough about you. He needs a man around—badly. I'm telling you that. To take him off his confounded concentration over his wife." And he added in a quick undertone, as Paul came toward us: "Like to see you sometime. Drop in for a yarn and a whisky, any time after five when you're up my way."

I knew that he wanted to discuss Paul. Every one who knew Paul wanted to talk about him. He was one of those beings who progress through the world in their own simple, absorbed fashion, unaware that they're the subject of constant speculation on the part of their friends. And I believed that Dorsey had some message to convey to me. Something about Natia.

I soon settled down to the agreeable routine of the house, a routine which appeared inviolable, as if death alone could disturb it. I rose about eight, and breakfasted downstairs with Paul—a barbarous northern custom, to which I submitted purely out of esteem for him. Personally I considered it indecent to appear in public before one's comatose brain and vitals had been galvanized by a cup of coffee. But Paul could be gay, tackling his sturdy British kidneys and bacon. After breakfast we'd take a sharp walk through the frosty fields. I liked the austerity of those Cotswold mornings. They were so different from anything I had experienced before; so unlike the sensuous, crowded, personal life of Italian cities. England in the morning, if you were still healthy-minded, was a tonic. And I was pleased to discover that I had not become entirely decadent.

Paul would stride along like a soldier, hatless in his rough russet tweeds, a pipe in his mouth and an ash stick in his hands. Often he would point out an old house, or a fox scurrying to cover, or a robin on a tombstone. About ten we would return to the house to work on his book, and to look up references in his library in connection with it. At one o'clock Natia would appear for lunch.

In the daytime she wore very correct and smart little costumes of tweed, and thick-soled brogue shoes. But she did not succeed in appearing English, if that was her aim. She was too neat, too perfect. Even the shoes were too gleaming. Foreign women, I reflected, rarely imitated the Anglo-Saxon successfully. They were not casual enough, in dress or manner. I saw an element of pathos in Natia's simulation of a vigorous outdoor woman. It was a game which she played, to please herself and Paul. For what, actually, could she do? A drive in the tubby little car with Paul and myself, after being tucked in a camel's-hair rug. Tea, perhaps, at Tewkesbury, or Cirencester, or Gloucester—if she did not become too tired on the way.

I was able to study Natia during those drives. Looking at her profile beside me, the high, creamy cheekbones, the short curved little nose, I realized that she had an extraordinarily eager face. She seemed always to be savoring life. . . . We would chat about trivial things, while Paul concentrated upon his driving. He rarely joined in our conversation. He had none of that slightly jealous desire to overhear us, which might have manifested itself in the average Continental husband. As a Latin this both puzzled and piqued me.

They were amazingly natural, those Drurys. But sometimes I found myself worrying about them—about their future. Why, I don't know, with an almost saccharine harmony existent between them. I decided that I was listening to some intuitive warning which had nothing to do with realities, but which was wholly evident to a sensitive nature. It was—I tried to explain it to myself—as if Paul's soul was like a wide-open door, whereas Natia's was only three-quarters open. There was something unfathomable there. And it was growing, daily. It was foreign, opaque, and only evidenced by her swift, unreasoning changes of mood from gravity to gaiety, from talkativeness to long silences. I'm sure Paul did not even notice it, and this was what worried me.

Early in February something happened which intensified my premonition of that enigma hovering over the Drurys; that impalpable threat menacing their harmony, drawing them apart in spite of themselves. As yet neither of them acknowledged its presence. Only I, an outsider, suspected it.

We had returned from a drive to Kelmscott with some valuable data concerning Rosetti, and, according to our habit, Paul and I hurried into the library for an hour's work before dinner. It was at this time of day, our bodies slightly fatigued, our minds stimulated, that we accomplished some of our best revision on Paul's book.

On this particular evening we were both soon absorbed in our work, Paul writing rapidly, I looking up references, trying to keep pace with his demands for filed notations. He was in one of his inspired moods, his hair ruffled, his face pale, his manner brusque. There was an intense, nervous excitement about him—as if he were on the verge of some literary discovery. The house was utterly quiet.

"We're on the track of something here," he exclaimed. He was poring over an immense Victorian volume, rumpling his hair, passing his hands down his cheeks. He stopped short suddenly, jerked his head up as if it had been in a hangman's noose, as some one knocked upon the library door.

The door opened. Natia stood there framed in its lintel, looking frail and beautiful in a black evening dress. She was wearing the small string of pearls Paul had given her at their wedding. Involuntarily I looked at my watch. It was barely six o'clock. And Natia had never appeared until half past seven.

Until then everything had run like clockwork in that house. That was Paul's nature. He had something of William Morris's own blend of the dreamer and the practical man in his make-up, and he was as infallible about time as a sundial. Also, he had given strict orders that he was never to be disturbed at work. At any rate, seeing Natia standing there, he looked up at her with that dazed, agonized expression of the creative artist when a golden moment of discovery has been shattered—a look of veritable passion frustrated and defeated.

But Natia saw none of this. "I couldn't sleep," she was saying. "For the first

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time in years I felt that I did not need my nap." She stood there, facing him, a hand poised on the door, smiling half-shyly. "I came to see if I could help you and Tony with the Kelmscott references."

Paul kept nodding and staring at her, his lips mobile but speechless. Then, pulling himself together, he took up the volume he had been reading and placed it on a shelf. "No, dear," he said gently, "there's nothing you could do. As a matter of fact, we'd finished our work, hadn't we, Tony?"

We had been plunged in the very middle of our work—but we left it there. When we all moved into the drawing-room Paul was staring at Natia's back in a bewildered way. I saw that he was greatly, deeply perturbed—not so much concerning the interruption as concerning the cause of it. Natia was chattering gaily. "How do you like my new dress?" she demanded, pivoting for our benefit. We admired it, and Paul played the game gallantly enough. He put an arm around her shoulder, saying: "Darling, it's simply splendid, your being able to skip your nap. It's ages since you've done that. Are you sure it's altogether wise?"

"Of course it is wise," she said. She was in an enigmatic, flighty mood. She turned to the dog, and knelt upon the floor beside him, pulling his ears and rubbing his stomach while he rolled over on his back, waving all four paws in the air. "Of course it's wise," she repeated in a high, clear, childish voice. "Humphrey knows. He understands, because he is the wisest of all." And she laughed again and again, while she tickled Humphrey so hard that he began to sneeze, and while Paul continued to stare at her with an adoring yet puzzled expression.

That incident, I realize now, would have been of little importance, had not another occurred, similar yet far more succinct, barely a week later. We were lunching, and along with the fruit Wentworth brought an envelope on a silver tray. She handed it to Natia, who glanced at the writing in surprise, and tore the envelope open. She brought out an engraved card.

"Paul!" she cried. "It's an invitation from Hadley House. I thought you had stopped leaving cards there."

She appeared greatly excited. Paul said, in a slightly bewildered tone: "I always leave cards there once or twice a year. But I didn't expect—I thought they knew that we didn't——"

But Natia interrupted him.

"The old lady's forgotten, of course, that I do not go out. She never remembers anything, anyway. But this is so exciting! A big ball for her daughter. There will be many people down from London. Do you think, possibly, we could go? You must get Tony an invitation at once!"

"Darling," Paul said. "Darling. I only wish—" He had put his hand on hers, and was patting it, as one consoles a child. But she wasn't listening to him. She had risen to her feet, suddenly and inexplicably triumphant. "Do you know, I really think I could go!"

"Natia," Paul said gravely. "You haven't danced since—" He did not, however, complete the sentence. He flushed instead. It was too painful to admit before a third person that one's wife had never been well enough to dance. He had never danced with her. . . . In that stammered, half-finished phrase of Paul's, the whole tragedy of Natia's life became sharply illuminated to me. But Natia did not notice it. She was in a state of uncontrolled elation. She was fantastic, a child, a gypsy, humming to herself, dancing, as she ran around the table to plead with Paul. "Aren't you pleased, my sweet? Aren't you happy that I am so well? Please say that you are happy!"

"I'm happy," Paul said, still patting her hand. "We'll ask Dorsey what he thinks." She threw back her head and laughed. "Dorsey knows nothing about it. I am the one to know. I myself. I can tell." And she tapped her breast. Then she abruptly remembered my presence, and turned to me—for assistance. It was all pretty awkward. Paul was now pacing the floor, jingling the coins in his pockets, frowning at the carpet. For the first time in his life, perhaps, he hesitated in a decision concerning his adored Natia. And she, seeing his indecision, flung her arms around him, there in front of me, and hugged him, rumpling his hair, crying: "Paul! Paul! You know I can go. Say I can go!"

I left the dining-room. I knew that I did not belong there. I pitied Paul, because I understood him. He believed that Natia was undergoing some emotional phase which she mistook for a gain in health. And I pitied Natia, too. As it turned out, Paul was right. Almost. . . . They accepted the invitation. But toward seven o'clock on the night of the ball Natia felt very tired, and went to bed. Wentworth had been ironing her best evening dress all the afternoon, under her supervision. When Natia, pallid and weary, finally admitted defeat and went slowly upstairs, Paul turned to me in the library. "Poor child," he said. "She couldn't have stood it. It's lucky it turned out this way, because I hadn't the heart to argue with her."

I nodded, but made no reply. I had my own ideas on the subject.

Natia and I had a talk one morning, a few days later. Paul had gone over to Cirencester to buy a horse for his farm. I felt lazy that day, and knowing nothing about horses I decided not to go with him. It was a morning of torrential rains, and he drove off in the little car with all the curtains up. Just before he left the house he said to me: "Try to cheer Natia up, Old Man. This is one of her bad days."

I knew all about her bad days, as he called them. The term was an exaggeration. Living in close quarters with her, day by day, he had come to observe the most minute fluctuations of her state of cheerfulness. Rain always depressed Natia, anyway. After he had gone I found her in the drawing-room, sitting beside the fire and threading a needle. She looked well enough, but not particularly happy, although she smiled up at me when I came in.

"I suppose you never have weather like this in your beloved Italy," she sighed. "It makes me long for a bright, unmerciful sun. We used to have such marvellous sun when we went to the beaches near Odessa for our holidays. I can remember how it felt on my skin. We were babies then, and we wore no clothes. It was lovely. . . . I wonder if I will ever feel warmth like that again? Paul thinks I am not strong enough for a long journey."

It was the first time I had heard her express so open a dissatisfaction with her surroundings. And it struck me that there was something highly signifi-

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cant in that sudden, vehement desire for the sun.

"Where would you go, Natia?" I asked. "Not to the Riviera? Paul would hate it's artificiality, I'm afraid. At heart he's a simple soul, with simple desires. The Riviera is a gaudy place, inhabited by a lot of people who are trying to have a good time and don't know how to manage it, and a lot of others who are having a good time and don't realize it."

She laughed a little. "But I'd love it! I would see the palm trees, and the blue sea and the white houses, and all the smart ladies with their pretty dresses." She was talking rapidly now, like an eager little girl explaining her thoughts to a patient listener. "You know, when I was a child there was plenty of gaiety in our country house. We had sometimes as many as twenty or thirty guests. And often some of them would stay a month with us."

"A Month in the Country," I quoted.

She made a little grimace.

"Oh, Turgenev! He's so gloomy. It was not at all like that, I assure you. Russians are not nearly so depressing as their writers would like them to be."

"All our memories of youth are tinted by the passage of time," I teased her.

"It *was* gay," she insisted, and stamped her foot. "You are mean to me this morning, Tony. Are you, too, entering into a conspiracy that there is no lightheartedness in the world, no frivolity, that is worth while? Are you, too, becoming gray and grave, like this country?"

"Natia!" I cried. "Natia! What do you mean? Are you unhappy?"

She turned her head quickly, and stared out of the window. And when she looked at me again her eyes were filled with a liquid humility which made me curse myself for the tone of reprimand which must have been in my voice. What an essentially gentle creature she was at heart, I thought. And how very lovely she was, with her proud, sleek little dark head, and her large grave eyes, and her long, white young throat. Who, I said to myself, can tell what mysteries are being entertained in that head, and what strange stirrings of health and vitality and youth are commencing in that delicate and still childish body? For I was certain now that a miracle was happening to Natia Drury.

Presently she said: "My dear Tony, I am unfair to you. How can you understand me, when I do not understand myself these days? Something has happened to me lately. It began, I think, on that afternoon when I found that I did not need my nap. It is like—" she hesitated, "—like a new confidence in myself. I am able to plan things, without fear. Until then, you see, I had wanted nothing, except to live and to be taken care of. A drowsy, contented feeling, without pain, and without ambition. It was all very simple—just like that. But now it is all different. . . ."

I asked: "Does Paul know this?"

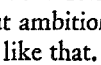
She shook her head.

"Isn't it strange that you haven't told him?" I persisted. I had no wish to make her miserable, but I wanted to get at the root of the thing. And here, alone with her, I saw my opportunity. For I had made an important discovery. I had found out that nothing I could say would really anger Natia. In some obscure way she trusted me, and there was a bond between us. How such bonds are formed is a mystery. A turn of the head, a sympathetic glance at the required moment, a mutual thought—and they are intuitively formed. And then again, we were Continentals, both of us. There was no Anglo-Saxon reticence, or a consideration of that great god, good form, to come between us like a vapor, to conceal and distort a reciprocal sincerity. A foreign woman, I reminded myself, might not trust a Latin physically; but she might confide her heart to him, because he had that understanding, feminine twist of mentality which was rare among Anglo-Saxons.

I walked over to the window. And there, not daring to face her, I said: "You mean, Natia Palieff—for you are still and always will be Natia Palieff, in spite of having the Drury attached, and in spite of a loyalty and devotion which I don't question. You mean that all of a sudden you're beginning to get well. After four years of quiet peace. And you mean, remembering that Paul is responsible for this, owing to his care of you, that you're frightened about the future. Because, if such a wonderful thing did happen, it would change your whole life, and Paul's too—this tranquil life he loves so much, and which you both intended to continue forever."

She didn't reply. But when I looked around she confirmed all I had said, for she was crying.

I looked out of the window again. An opaque curtain of rain was slanting across the sodden, silvery pastures. The sky was lowering, and a lonely copper beech at the crest of the ridge, toward Crow's Nest, was bent against the gale, fighting for its life, cowering over a wall of harsh gray stone. It was a hardy country, I told myself. A man's country.



That brisk little Irishman, Dorsey, came on his weekly visit the next morning. He passed a long time with Natia. And when he came downstairs, to join Paul and myself in the library, he said that Natia was definitely getting well.

For a moment Paul appeared stunned. Then he fell into an extraordinary, childish outburst of joy. He capered about the room, throwing books into the air, slapping Dorsey's back, shouting, wringing my hand. He made Dorsey repeat his verdict again and again. And when he was at last convinced of it he turned very white, saying: "You must excuse me, you two chaps. . . . You must excuse me." He hurried out of the room. A moment later I caught sight of him in the garden, through the window. It was a brilliant, sunny morning, and his fair hair looked like a halo. His head was turned as he passed the window, walking slowly, his hands behind his back clasping and unclasping spasmodically. In one hand there was a handkerchief.

He came back to us in a few minutes, still white and taut, his eyes shining. He rang for Wentworth, and sent her scurrying to the cellar for a bottle of his oldest and best Madeira. And finally, calming down a little, he said to Dorsey: "I must see a specialist. I hope you don't mind. But, you see, this news is *too* magnificent. Before we tell Natia I want Trenholm to see her. To confirm it."

"My dear man!" said Dorsey. He looked dumbfounded. "I'm telling you. She knows it already, and has known it for some days past. You cannot fool a woman. As soon as she got all the rest she needed, she began to regain confidence. That's what she wanted—confidence. And you're to be congratulated, Drury, on the care you've given her. I've watched you. I know."

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Paul said that was all nonsense.

"It was her own courage, Dorsey. Nothing but her own courage. When did she begin the upward turn?"

"About four weeks ago," Dorsey told him.

"About the time Tony arrived," Paul added. And then, for a fraction of a second, there was an awkward little pause—as if we were wishing that Paul hadn't said that. It was passing, barely perceptible, but I saw Dorsey's sharp glance in my direction, and I did not like it. Wentworth then appeared with the Madeira, and we gathered around the dusty bottle while Paul tried to draw the cork. His hand was unsteady, and he had to turn the bottle over to me.

Trenholm, the London specialist, arrived the next evening in a car that looked like a yellow yacht on silver wheels. He was a tall, austere individual, wearing a morning coat and rimless pince-nez, and he faintly resembled a certain President of the United States. He was cool and precise, and apparently devoid of all human emotions. When he came downstairs, after spending half an hour with Natia, he asked for a glass of sherry. Seating himself in an armchair, making a gable of his fingers, he looked at me with critically raised eyebrows. Paul explained hurriedly: "Count Jenesta is a good friend of mine, Doctor. He is welcome to hear anything you have to say." He was nervous about Trenholm, and about the whole visit. He seemed to need my presence to support him through the ordeal.

After Trenholm had plunged into a mass of technical details, during which the word "cardiac" occurred a good many times, he wound up with the statement: "Your wife is positively on the road to recovery. It is one of those rare triumphs of will over body. And now there is one thing upon which I insist. She must be taken away from here at once, to a warm dry climate. Her whole nature craves it, and her recovery is as much psychological as physical."

I saw Paul looking startled at the news, and I knew what it meant to him. He must uproot himself at a moment's notice from everything that was close to his heart—except Natia. The house, the stables, the garden in Springtime—he had often spoken to me of the wonder of Spring in the Cotswolds—and, also, he must leave his half-finished book. But he said, without the slightest hesitation: "Of course. Where should we go, and for how long?"

Trenholm rose and bundled himself into an enormous fur-lined overcoat. He took a final sip of sherry, snapped the case of his hunter watch open, and closed it again. "You must leave at once," he pronounced. "Upper Egypt would be the ideal climate for her. At least until the first of April."

"Some quiet little villa," Paul suggested.

"Not at all," Trenholm said sharply. "Let her choose the place herself. A large hotel, if she prefers it. And if she wants gaiety within reason, let her have it. I tell you, there is a psychological factor there which must not be ignored. Mrs. Drury is interested in the outside world for the first time. Whatever you do, do not hamper her small desires. She must be allowed to have the most complete confidence in herself. And, by the way——"

He drew Paul aside to a corner of the room and spoke a few words to him, emphasizing the importance of his advice by tapping him on the shoulder as he spoke. Paul nodded, turned a little pale, but said nothing.

After Trenholm had gone we sat alone in the firelight. Paul was lost in thought. He seemed to be pondering over the doctor's private advice—whatever it had been. . . .

A travel agency in London sent Paul a sheaf of gaudy literature depicting Egypt; the dazzling sunshine and sand; the great ivory-colored hotel bordering the Nile at Luxor; the rococo Italian liners which transported one in a maze of gilded columns across the Mediterranean from Genoa. To my own nature those pictures were like a slab of sunshine upon the dark mahogany table of Paul's library, but he examined them with an air of distrust.

"They actually hurt my eyes," he said. "And look at this. Cocktails in the Pompeian swimming pool before luncheon. . . . Afternoon cinema in the Rinascente ballroom. . . . Is that how the modern world amuses itself? I don't belong there. I couldn't think. . . . It's all so glary."

That was just it, I thought. He couldn't have phrased it better. He feared that journey toward the sun. He feared the foreign sun itself, beating malevolently down upon unfamiliar faces. It was not the mellow, diluted light which he knew and trusted. He was, as Ogilvie had once pointed out, a character in subdued tones; and during those years of Natia's handicap he had become indigenous to the Cotswold soil. He belonged like the very lichen to those gray walls and sloping fields; to the willows that swayed over Windrush river; to the stone farmhouses and clean, windy skies.

I was absorbed, watching the changes in Natia after Trenholm had confirmed her recovery. Almost daily I could chart the gradual growth of confidence in herself, and the slow burgeoning of an incisive, direct feminine charm which had remained concealed, as it were, under a mantle of childish helplessness. And daily that long, coltish body ripened into exquisite little curves. It dawned on me with the force of an impact that Paul was going to have not only a beautiful wife, but an exceptionally beautiful one; and I knew that her beauty would introduce a new factor in their lives, which neither of them would be able to ignore.

Natia was not always happy. I didn't have to be a clairvoyant to perceive this. Sometimes I'd catch her looking at Paul with an enigmatic, strained expression which I tried to analyze. A mixture, it seemed to me, of humility and disappointment and annoyance. Yet she never voiced such moods, and Paul, I think, remained unaware of them.

I ran into Dorsey one afternoon in Crow's Nest, and he at once invited me into his cottage near the village green for a whisky and soda. After a while we spoke of Natia. I described the Trenholm visit, and I mentioned the latter's private advice which had appeared to worry Paul.

"Also," I said, "she isn't altogether happy. She looks at him once in a while in the strangest way. I hate to discuss intimacies, but I want to see those two happy. And I have a feeling that they're not going to be happy, in spite of this miracle."

"Not in spite of it," Dorsey said. "Because of it."

"As bad as all that?" I asked.

He nodded sagely. He had a large

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and somnolent Persian cat on his knees.

"As for your apology," he said impatiently, "it's not needed. Doctors hear nothing but intimacies all their lives. Your motives are sincere, I take it, and we happen to be the only two people in the world in a position to help the Drurys." Then he leaned forward, his voice intensely earnest. "I've been waiting for this talk with you. You know, of course, what Trenholm told Paul that evening. What any medical man would have told him. To resume a normal life with his wife. Simply that. I'm not betraying a secret there, to any man with his eyes open."

"Good God," I said. "Do you mean to say——"

"Oh, I don't mean," he interrupted, "that in the very beginning their marriage wasn't normal enough. But, you see, she was half-child, half-invalid. I suppose Drury soon discovered that her health and temperament couldn't stand that sort of thing. He was always kind. . . . You see what happened. In the ensuing years their marriage relapsed into a tender, guardian-and-ward affair. Do you realize now what a bombshell that Harley Street fellow launched? Think of it! A honeymoon, after those long, placid years. It's all horribly pathetic, and I can see it so damned clearly. Paul, a delicate soul, building up a sort of heavenly legend around his wife; a compound of tenderness, and companionship, and a deep, abiding pity. All the enemies of passionate love. And it is almost psychologically impossible to destroy a legend of that kind. Often it is stronger than reality, in the mind of the idealist, the tremendously mental type. The influence of an austerity complex over sex can be mighty, mind you. Mighty."

"Afraid of shattering an ideal," I mused.

"Exactly. By heavens, we're up against a problem here. And we're tongue-tied, you and I."

"Not you," I said.

"Trenholm has spoken," he reminded me. "You don't want to drive the man mad. One handles a situation like this with gloves. By the way, you'd better go to Egypt with them."

I shook my head.

"I couldn't do any good."

He looked at me in a curious way. I don't know what was in his mind. After all he was a Celt, and the Celts sometimes have fantastic, involved schemes based upon their own vision and sense of prophecy.

"It would be a good turn," he insisted. "You're their one tried and true friend. You even witnessed their courtship. They'll need some one to steer them on that journey, now that they've been chucked out of their precious nest."

"You're mad, Dorsey," I told him. "I'm the last man in the world to play the rôle of a hovering cupid."

"Nonsense," he said. "I don't expect you to spy on their personal relationship. That would be unthinkable. All I want you to do is to go along, and help them with all the wretched details of travel. Tickets, hotel rooms, and so forth. Make them happy, gay, at those excellent French dining-places. Bring them together under the pleasantest possible circumstances. And be there if anything untoward happens. . . ."

"Such as——"

"Anything might happen," he cried, "with a man in Paul's frame of mind, and a woman in Natia's. I see things ahead, Jenesta. They're babes in the woods, those two. . . ."

In the end I agreed to go with the Drurys as far as Genoa, where they were to take the steamer for Egypt. It was time that I returned to Florence, anyway. And Paul needed my help on the final chapters of the book. "I've become so used to discussing details with you," he said. "Two weeks on the Riviera will finish the job."

He had to go up to London one day to make arrangements for the journey. He left by the 10.15 from Chipping Norton. It was a fine, crisp February morning, and about noon Natia came downstairs to find me filing some of his notes. She was wearing gray tweeds and a jaunty little hat trimmed with a pheasant's quill. She stood tentatively in the doorway of the library, swinging one leg like a schoolgirl. "Are you too busy?" she said. "I'd like to go out somewhere for lunch. Would you take me to the Lygon Arms? It is always cosy there."

I was astonished—for she had never gone out to lunch since I had been in the house—but I said: "Why, certainly, Natia. It would be a privilege. When do you want to leave?"

"Now!" she cried, beating a tattoo on the floor with her foot. "I'm tired of this house, all of a sudden. Fed up, as Paul would say. I am restless. I want to be moving, in the sunshine. Do you understand? Do you know how I feel? It is a kind of excitement about nothing in particular and everything in general. I am quite crazy, I warn you. I am liable to stand on my head, or climb walls, or chase rabbits. I may disgrace you at the Lygon if you are too pompous. You have grown very solemn lately, Tony!"

I realized that she was giving herself the luxury of a completely temperamental mood. It was very foreign. Russian, if you like. At any rate it was not at all English, and I had a sneaking suspicion that she would not have dared to act in that fashion before Paul. In a way I felt flattered, as any man feels when a pretty woman trusts him enough to allow him an occasional glimpse of her heart.

"Now," she stamped. "Now. Now! Put away your old papers." And she swept them from the desk onto the floor, where they lay scattered on the sunny patches of the carpet. I made a dive at her, but she eluded me, and with a graceful outflinging of her arms, like a dancer gathering the whole bright world to her bosom, she dashed—literally dashed—into the drawing-room, and out the glass door leading to the garden. And Humphrey, suddenly appearing from beneath a chair, streaked after her yelping, approving entirely of her mood.

I hurried down to the stable and got the car. "This is fun," Natia declared as we breasted the hill to Crow's Nest. "It is years since I lunched with a man. Only once did I do it. Is that not a sad confession? It was in Moscow, when I was sixteen, with Alexis Palieff. But it did not really count, since he was my second cousin. And second cousins make very dull beaux. Did you ever try one? Afterward he took me to the zoo, when I had been hoping all along to go to a wicked music hall. Wasn't that typical of a second cousin? We looked into each other's eyes outside the lion's cage—and we discovered nothing."

In this manner she prattled on while we rolled through the clean, bare coun-

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tryside. We slid down the winding road from Crow's Nest, through thickets of beech, and there were thin blue columns of smoke ascending cheerfully into the wintry sky from a nest of cottages far down in the Worcestershire valley.

"I worship the sun," Natia said. "Every ray of it brings happiness and health to me. I long for gaiety, too, Tony. The luxury of big winter hotels. Oh, if you knew how I felt. Poised, on the threshold of everything. . . ." Her face clouded. "And yet, I wonder if Paul understands. I wish he did. For I hardly know myself how I am going to act. It is as if I could guarantee nothing. Do you think he will make allowances? Perhaps he was never very young himself. What do you think?"

I said cautiously, as we rounded a sunny curve and dipped into the wide, open fields of Worcestershire: "Paul experienced a great deal in his youth, Natia, which would make him serious about life. Youth, after all, is principally a mental condition. Men of Paul's type cannot treat life as a joke. Perhaps his very seriousness, his sense of pity, brought him to you. A more flippant man could never have concealed the ideal of protection which he built around you."

"That is true," she said soberly. She nodded to herself; then changed the conversation, as if it were not to her taste. We rolled down the hill and into the village of Broadway. At that time of year there were few tourists at the inn, and we had an excellent luncheon with a bottle of Barsac. "It is good," Natia said, gazing into the honey-colored depths of her glass. "It means youth and joy. For the first time in years it tastes good to me."

After luncheon I did something foolish; although it did not seem foolish at the time. An old woman was selling early spring violets at the door of the inn. They were absurdly cheap, and I bought the whole basket for Natia. All the way home she was arranging them in her lap, burying her face in them, and a slow flush had crept into her cheeks. She looked at me with large, dark, pensive eyes. "Please tell me one thing," she said. "To make me completely happy. Tell me that they are not—for a sick woman."

"They are for a beautiful, well woman," I told her. One of my natural speeches. But two tears rolled down her cheeks, and under her rug she gave my arm an impulsive little squeeze. "Not really beautiful?"

"Really."

And she said in a low voice: "Oh, thank you for that, Tony. You are helping every day to make me get well."

When we reached the house she paused on the doorstep. "I don't think we shall tell Paul of this excursion," she said.

I must have looked astounded, for she explained hastily: "It is not deceit. It is only that I have just realized an extraordinary thing. This was the first time I ever left the house for lunch. And it seems wrong, doesn't it, that Paul was not present?"

It was strange, I agreed, that neither of us had thought of it.

Part Three

In the middle of February we left the Cotswolds and began our pilgrimage toward the sun.

We took the Blue Train at Calais, and the journey proved to be fairly easy. Natia dozed most of the time as we sped through the flat, misty fields of France. But beyond Toulon the sun burst upon us in so white a radiance that we felt as if we were reborn, and Natia roused herself, yawned, stretched, and came out of her cocoon. We were trundling along that incredible coast of red rocks near Fréjus. Through the passing fretwork of stone pines we caught glimpses of a gentian sea rippling toward a silver-edged horizon. Away off to the south a cargo ship was sauntering to Corsica, her smoke a palpable mustard smear above the quivering division of sea and sky.

Natia opened the window and leaned out. The wind whipped her dark hair back from her forehead, and she was like a cameo in ivory. She was suddenly transformed. Her lips were parted, drinking in that soft morning air as if she were satisfying a thirst of years. We rounded a curve, and ahead of us there were columns of smoke spiralling into a flawless cobalt above the scarlet roofs of Cannes. And the air was all at once filled with the cloying sweetness of mimosa.

"Oh," she cried. "Look at it, Paul. Look at it, Tony. It cannot be real! I feel as if I were just beginning to live. . . ."

At Cannes I left the Drurys at the Majestic and went to a smaller hotel on the Rue d'Antibes. It was less expensive; and also, I thought magnanimously, it would allow them more opportunity to be alone. I hadn't forgotten that strange talk with Dorsey.

Along about nine that first evening I strolled over to the Majestic to join them for dinner. They had not come downstairs yet, so I went into the bar and consumed several dry Martinis. A few minutes later a fellow I used to know in Florence called Tito Guardi came lounging in. Tito always had just that hint of dissipation about him which made him interesting to women. Even now his appearance caused a stir and a chattering among the feminine element in the bar. He was wearing a double-breasted dinner coat, and a long tube of amber projected from his mouth at a defiant angle. His dark features looked wearier and wiser than ever.

I was not overjoyed at seeing him. He'd been a great friend of Cesare Riva's, Carlotta's ex-husband, and I did not want particularly to revive memories of either of them. But Tito spotted me, gave an elegant and languid wave of his hand, and joined me. We had a drink together.

"I saw your friend Carlotta," he said, while I inwardly damned him. "I ran across her in Genoa the other day. She's back at that night club again, singing. You were a dog, Tony, to drop her like that."

This at once annoyed me. Compared with Tito's amatory career my own was angelic. I said sharply: "If you'd taken the trouble to find out why I left Carlotta you wouldn't be so ready to criticize."

He threw back his head and laughed.

"But I did find out! I had a tremendous talk with her. We dined together at the Miramar. And she explained everything about your quarrel in Milan. After three years she's still devoted to you, apparently. God knows why, but women are strange. She talked about you all the time, and she even wept—which was hard luck on me, considering that I was blowing her to dinner."

"Were her explanations satisfactory to you?" I asked sourly. "She's a clever woman, but no cleverer than you are, Tito."

"They were plausible," he said, calling the waiter and ordering another

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round. "It seems that you caught her dancing with a cheap-looking fellow at Cova's. And then she lied, pretending that she'd been shopping. Do you know why? The man was her own cousin, an Austrian, and he happened to be a local agent for the Fiat people. You'd often said, according to her, that you wanted one of those little 509 Fiat cars, but couldn't afford it. Well—she was trying to work a cut-price on the car for you, as a surprise. That's all. By making herself agreeable to the fellow, and kidding him along. There wasn't any question of unfaithfulness, until you arrived and assumed that she'd put horns on your head. And Carlotta's proud, you know. She wasn't going to stand for that."

"A hell of a story," I said. "I thought you'd grown up, Tito."

At that moment Natia and Paul entered the bar. She was wearing white chiffon, and her hair had been arranged by a Cannes coiffeur. It was shaped to her head like rippling, blue-black metal. I saw women whispering about her, surveying her with that slithering, head-to-foot appraisal which was an inimical form of feminine tribute, an admission that she was of some consequence.

After I had introduced Tito he proceeded to entertain Natia in his usual way, with a few fragrant items of Cannes scandal. There was this lady who had lost her lover, and that lady who had gained a new one. Tito was always fairly bold with women. Also, he labored under none of the disadvantages in which my own loyalty to Paul placed me. His spaniel's eyes roamed over Natia's person, and their expression was little short of a caress. Paul fidgeted in his chair. It was clear that he detested Tito, and I couldn't altogether blame him.

About ten we drifted across the Croisette, toward the Ambassadeurs where we had planned to dine. Tito lingered with us, and consulted his watch. "It's late," he said. "I must think about dining somewhere." But Paul refused to take the hint. When he had left us Natia exclaimed: "You might have asked the poor man to join us, Paul. He is so amusing." Paul murmured something about hangers-on. "Anyway," she said cheerfully, "we're to meet him at the Carlton for cocktails to-morrow about noon." She was elated. The evening, or perhaps Tito with his languid glances, had gone slightly to her head. In the Ambassadeurs she kept patting the nape of her neck, and looking at herself in a tiny octagonal mirror. Her eyes roamed that glittering throng of diners with an eagerness that amounted almost to greed—as if she had been starved for such spectacles, for years and years.

Cannes began its battle for Natia that first night. Tito, who knew practically every one there, joined us after dinner in the baccarat rooms and presented a dozen people to her. An English baronet who owned a fleet of ships; several American couples; two or three Italian bachelors. Natia herself discovered the Orenskis from Moscow, who had known her as a child. I suddenly remembered that Natia had been the daughter of old General Palieff, one of the Russian court's favorite soldiers. But Cannes was determined not to forget it, or to permit her to forget it. That Russian clique, living in a happy travesty of an obsolete but highly decorative royalist régime, seized her and planted her in the midst of it. Cannes, in other words, took her up.

The three of us received many invitations, and slowly but surely we were drawn into the vortex. To have ignored it would have been equivalent to rowing against the tide of a powerful stream. We dined; we played baccarat; we wandered on to night clubs in obscure, dark streets. Often there'd be a milky infiltration in the sky when I reeled up the steps of my wan little hotel; but Natia's new friends seemed to find cause for triumph in the fact that they'd witnessed another dawn in their dancing slippers.

For a week it amused Paul. "They're like a hunting set, without horses, hounds, or fox," he declared. He then began to worry about the accelerated trend of Natia's life, although she slept daily until noon. He called in a fashionable French doctor, an elegant creature of infinite airs and graces, but he immediately succumbed to her pleadings, and after a perfunctory examination he stated that she was as well as any one, and could do what she wanted. This merely put Paul four thousand francs out of pocket, and rendered him defenseless.

Not that Paul complained about Natia's gaiety. He acquitted himself magnificently, I should say, among those empty Cordon Rouge bottles and stacked baccarat chips—especially for a man who was most at home on the banks of a trout stream, and could tell a bird unseen from its liquid note. I remember him on our round of dinners, smiling his shy, wistful smile, and glancing down the table to see how Natia was faring. He never once forgot her. I'd see him rushing from room to room in the Casino, with a pile of *jetons* in his hand, looking for her, ready to find out whether she was tired and wanted to go home. Some of the younger men, Tito's friends, would watch him with mocking eyes. For Cannes had already stripped him of his armor, and under those garish lights he underwent, relentlessly, a loss of leadership. People would say: "We'll invite that pretty Palieff girl and her husband."

Finally he took up golf. And freed from social exigencies, at least during the daytime, he was again a comparatively happy man. In the midst of that universal, predatory hunt for pleasure he had rooted out a trio of tall, taciturn Englishmen with bony, ruddy features, who wore tweeds and went clanking in and out of their modest little hotel with gigantic golf bags. They were silent, pipe-smoking giants who recognized in Paul their own breed. They'd all climb into some hired car after breakfast, and would return at sunset. And after Paul had left them, in search of Natia, they would sit in some bar on the Rue d'Antibes with pencils and strips of pasteboard, recounting their day's sins and triumphs and omissions. They never saw a night club, because they were all in bed by ten, after polishing their clubs with sandpaper. Nor did Natia ever meet them.

One morning Paul took his manuscript from his valise, and we attempted some work upon it. But the sunlight-flooded salon, the blinding blue panel of the sea beyond the open windows, were too demoralizing. They short-circuited any possible communing with that dormant, gray little world of the Cotswolds; and so we put the manuscript away. "Never mind," Paul said cheerfully. "These are Natia's innings now. She's been patient enough with our bookishness in the past. I'll take the thing up again in the Spring."

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He sighed. "I'd hate to miss Spring at Crow's Nest, Old Man. You've no idea what it's like. . . ." He walked over to the windows, and watched the drifting throng on the Croisette. But the sun caused him to shield his eyes, and to blink. "Funny lot," he mused. "Can't make out what they're driving at. I suppose you see the same weary faces at Deauville and Biarritz. Eluding their own shadows, probably. They're like those wooden horses you see on merry-go-rounds, solemnly moving in a fixed circle, always returning to the starting-point with an unchanged, prancing attitude, and the same set expressions on their painted features. . . ."

He went off to his golf; and I joined Natia on the Croisette. Whenever I was alone with her that week I could not help thinking that the Drury situation was inevitably heading for a tragic turn. Paul's innate goodness, I reasoned, his faith and devotion, had been the primary cause of her cure. Yet that very cure might shatter the vast ideal he had built around her. He had, in fact, woven a halo about her head which, at any moment, she was capable of dissolving. But, in her vivid presence such sombre reflections were soon forgotten. Now that Paul was golfing regularly, she and I were constantly together; promenading the Croisette so that she might display her new and pretty clothes; lunching on the flowered terrace of some restaurant; attending a tennis tournament or the races in the afternoon; an hour's baccarat at seven. A tender, half-sentimental friendship flourished naturally under those palms, beside that indigo sea. And proximity played its banal but inevitable rôle.

She telephoned me early one morning. Paul had already gone to golf, she said, to play in a tournament at Sospel. There was to be a banquet for the players, afterwards, in Monte Carlo and she didn't expect him home until late. Would I care to dine with her quietly at the Majestic? I looked out of my window and absorbed the radiance of the morning. It was a miracle of a day—a day which surely belonged to Natia and myself, since in a week's time she and Paul would be embarking for Egypt. A saffron sea of mimosa rustled in the garden below my window, and my room was filled with its saccharine fragrance. Across the blinding mirror of the bay I could see the island of Saint Honore, an attenuated strip of pale green which appeared to be suspended in liquid air on the shimmering, hazy horizon.

"Let's have a picnic on the island," I said. A silence followed. Then I heard her voice, plaintive with that contralto Russian plaintiveness which ends in a wistful note. "But, Tony . . . I cannot go with you to your island. I have promised to take tea with Tito Guardi at Juan-les-Pins. We can dine together just the same, can we not?"

Damn women, anyway. They can create issues out of thin air, by the momentary magic of their voices. I said furiously: "You are not going to tea with Tito. You are not going to desert me. It is vital and important that we should spend the day together."

"Why?" she asked.

"Because you're sailing next week. And because we're good friends. And because I have decided that we are going to Saint Honore for a picnic."

I heard her giggling.

"You sound jealous of Tito."

"That is neither here nor there."

It was like two strangers talking. In thirty seconds our whole relationship had altered. Men and women are like that—when the woman is pretty.

After a pause Natia said: "You are very imperious this morning. Do you imagine that I am going to pamper your whims?"

"I know you will," I said. And I hung up. There is an art in knowing when to hang up.

She was waiting for me on the terrace of the Majestic when I came by half an hour later. She was all in white, with one of those big, floppy, childish straw hats. She had a package in her hand; and when I asked what it was she laughed in a sweet, embarrassed way. "It's our lunch. I went shopping for it on the Rue d'Antibes. I knew you would forget it."

My heart leapt, because of a sense of triumph. Yet that triumph only confirmed what I had recently suspected: that Natia held me connected, interwoven, with the supreme phase of her life—her return to health, and youth, and gaiety. Those innocently given violets at the Lygon Arms had cast a few roots in her heart. I could tell this in her eyes when she shyly gave me her hand, there on the steps of the Majestic Hotel. A gracious but mute surrender. It was all very unfair to Paul, of course, although I never thought of him at the moment. He happened to be engaged in whacking a gutta-percha ball off a green mound, as if his very life depended upon the distance it travelled. So very Anglo-Saxon. . . .

When we reached the island we wandered along sandy paths through the deep woods. "It's like being in a green cathedral," Natia said.

We chose a mossy bank at lunch-time, and spread out the contents of her package. We had caviare, and rolls, a cold chicken, and a straw-covered flask of Chianti. She was quite adorable, I thought, preparing the lunch in her grave, concentrated way. I watched every movement she made. Her beauty was in complete harmony with that perfect day. The simple white dress; the dark, glossy hair worn closely about her head; the rich, creamy pallor of her skin. She was like Spring itself, I decided. Spring in an arrested mood of poised, tentative beauty. Her freshness was a miracle after all the harsh, enamelled masks I had gazed on for the past two weeks.

After lunch she brought out some embroidery from a bag and began to work upon it, while I lay on my back and watched the fat, lazy clouds drifting beyond the limbs of the trees. And presently she said: "This island casts a spell on us, doesn't it, Tony? We've hardly talked at all."

"Little green islands," I told her, "have a way of casting their enchantment upon mortals. It is their privilege. They hint to us of the supreme pleasures of isolation, away from a noisy, commerce-mad world. Come to us, they say, and we will teach you true values. And they point out to us, by the lapping of the waves and the sighing of the boughs, all we have managed to miss through our own greed and ambition."

"Yes," she said. "I feel the peace of it, too. It is all so real and simple. Different from over there." And she nodded toward the mainland, shimmering in a colorless glare across the bay. "That place casts a spell, also. But it isn't a bit real. It is only a substitute for reality."

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I was chewing a blade of grass, and I took it from my mouth.

"My dear Natia," I teased her. "Don't pretend that you're not mad about Cannes. Haven't I watched you night after night, entering restaurants with the look of a conqueror in your eyes? It's the breath of life to you."

She dropped her embroidery and stared at me.

"You don't really believe that? I thought you understood me—after all these weeks together."

"What else am I to believe?" I asked her.

"Oh, Tony," she sighed. "It is a long story. I really should not have to tell it to you, for you must have seen it for yourself. In England when you first saw me there I was happy, in a drowsy, half-alive way. And Paul took care of me so wonderfully. But, you see, I was in a sort of dream all the time. And yet, in my own heart, I seemed to know that it was nothing but a prelude. I was always hoping, hoping, to get well. I knew that some day the curtain would go up, and life would begin. . . . And now, at last, it has begun. But what do I find? Not a single, real, vital thing in it to which I can cling. Isn't that strange? Can you understand it? Are you as intelligent as I believe you to be? Do you know that I am a ghost, walking through a make-believe world—and all because I cannot convince Paul of my reality? He looks through me, as if I were transparent, and all he can see is something which has ceased to exist—that delicate child who only needed to be taken care of!"

And she hid her face in her hands.

I had no desire to talk about Paul. All I could think of, again and again, was: how utterly lovely she is, and why cannot she be happy as she deserves to be? I wanted to retain the image of her forever in my mind, as she sat there bending over her sewing in that terribly serious yet terribly young way. And because I couldn't help it; because the moment was greater, more exigent, than myself, I seized the slender column of her arm and kissed it. She turned her head with a swift and lovely movement, but said nothing. I knew then that she was one of those women who are adorably inarticulate in emotion. That quick turn of the head, that silence, inflamed me. I bent toward her, capturing her hands. But I did not kiss her. I only sat there, stroking her little hands, stricken, deprived of all motion—because of the message in her wide, half-hurt eyes as she turned again toward me.

I knew that message only too well. Dusky and veiled, timid yet irrepressible, as if it hardly dared to understand itself. The mute, pleading message of a young woman belonging to an old race, with centuries of strife and bloodshed and misery behind it; with all its battles and deaths, its triumphs and ecstasies; its brief, snatched moments of consuming love—the most important, the only valid moments to a woman.

The last wall of our defense, our mutual protection, was on the verge of being obliterated. Yet while her very helplessness enthralled me, it restrained me; for it was so different from the careless ardor of the women I had known. I do not think she was even aware of the message in her eyes. She had all the bewilderment, the naïve lack of co-ordination between mental and physical emotion, of a woman still very young in matters of love. And I knew, as one knows oneself profoundly at such moments, that I had no right to play my trivial, sensuous tunes upon the strings of that lute.

All at once she rose, and began nervously to gather up her sewing. She gave me a pitiful little smile.

"I think we had better go, don't you? There is a boat leaving at three."

I discovered, trying to face the situation honestly while the launch panted and wheezed on its way back to Cannes, that I had no desire to violate the little Grecian temple which was Natia's heart. I watched her, trailing her arm in the water while she sat in the stern of the boat, and I told myself: I do not want to embark upon a love affair with Natia Drury. Her charm and youth would no doubt prove themselves capable of a great and enduring love, if her honest heart were skilfully enough manipulated. She was in that mood. Ready. Poised, as it were. . . . Even while I looked at her, she withdrew her trailing arm from the water, and placed the palm of her hand against her burning cheeks. Her eyes met mine, but she lowered them quickly.

I examined my own position in this whole matter of Paul and Natia, asking myself where the devil I was heading for. And I saw disaster on the horizon, for the three of us. The futile, irrevocable kind of disaster which worldly people never forgave, because of its stupidity. Oh, I realized vividly enough all the fragrant promise she offered, if one dared to take her by the hand and lead her forward. I had the specific Latin imagination for such things. But it was not for me to accomplish that. Not while Paul was on earth, I reminded myself. I remembered how I had told Natia, while she lay on her couch in Château d'Oex: "If his ideals die, he will die with them. . . ."

Nor had I any wish to substitute the equilibrium of her life and mine for some brief, oriental vision of rapture. There were no moral heroics in this reasoning. It was a simple male instinct of self-preservation, for I could see beyond the vision. Far beyond it.

I knew myself well enough by now. I knew the kind of woman I really wanted. No tender, wide-eyed flower swaying herself to my every whim, with all the pliancy and humility of youth and inexperience. If I became again involved in an adventure of the heart it would be with some pretty, worldly little creature who knew thoroughly what she was about; who could take the inevitabilities of life with a smile; who would go on her way, when all was over, with a gallant wave of her hand. A woman—and I had to force myself to admit it at the expense of my own pride—like Carlotta. . . .

The launch swept up to the Cannes breakwater. We stepped ashore and walked under the palms of the Croisette toward the Majestic. It was a blazing afternoon, and as we crossed the streets the asphalt sucked at our heels. We were both a trifle tired when we reached the hotel. "I'm dining alone to-night," she reminded me in a wistful tone. "Paul has his tournament, and may not be back until about twelve." I thought rapidly: I've made up my mind to leave Cannes, but there is no reason in the world why we should not have a little farewell dinner together. I can tell her then. There is a graceful way of doing everything, if one takes the trouble. So I replied: "Of course we'll dine together. Where would you like to go?"

She didn't know. We were standing

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there on the hotel steps, in the full, unmitigated blast of the afternoon sun. "Let us go up to the salon and talk it over," she said. "I cannot stay here. It is too hot. Besides, you would like a drink, wouldn't you?"

The Drurys had a neat little bandbox of a salon upstairs, and I remembered that Paul usually kept whisky and soda on hand. It sounded tempting, especially as I was melting from the heat. I followed her into the elevator.

In the little pink salon I waited, with a tall glass in my hand, while Natia bathed and changed her clothes. It was very pleasant, I felt, sitting there in the cool semi-darkness. The shutters beyond the open windows were half-closed, admitting only a narrow panel of daylight, and effectively cutting off the combined glare of sun and sea. Opposite me, on the mantelpiece, I saw a great silver bowl filled with luscious, dark roses. They were Paul's, of course. He brought roses to Natia every morning.

The ice tinkled in my glass as it moved on its intermittent journey, and the flies buzzed about the ornate ceiling, which looked like the top of a wedding cake. Pleasant summery sounds. I lighted a cigarette and relapsed into a drowsy, contented mood. I looked again at that gorgeous and expensive display of roses, and I thought: what a strange, strange man is Paul Drury, with his constant and symbolic gestures of love, his impeccable courtesy, toward his wife, and—his blindness. I pictured him as he was, with his fair, crisp hair; his lean face, now sunburnt from the golf courses of the Riviera; his lithe, active body in well-fitted tweeds. A man, surely, with charm for women. An ideal lover—if he only saw himself as such. That was the crux of it. If he only saw himself as such. For, after all, the average man's power and success with women were in exact ratio to his self-confidence, his appraisal of himself as a lover; and that was the secret of the game.

I had decided to clear out of Cannes, for reasons of my own. But how was I to explain them to Paul, and to point out the way to happiness with Natia? It was all very simple to think about; but it remained, in the final analysis, an unthinkable act. One couldn't tell a man that he'd better make love to his wife, and damn quickly too, or he'd lose her. . . .

While I pondered over this, framing brave speeches of the type which one knows one will never utter, Natia rejoined me in the salon. She was wearing a dark blue pleated skirt, and a white blouse with a wide, childish collar. A simple enough costume. But I had never seen her more exquisite, more adorably young. The sheer silk of her blouse revealed rather than concealed the tender swelling of her breasts. She was hatless now, her sleek little head bared, and there was a fragrance about her of the pleasant accessories of the bath. She poured for herself a diminutive dose of whisky, and came over to sit beside me on the sofa. "Could you not come to Egypt with us, for a little while?" she said. "Think of it! The Nile, and the desert, and the glorious sun."

And then I told her.

"I am leaving Cannes to-morrow, Natia. I'm going home to Florence."

Her hand flew to her throat.

"Why?" she asked. "Why?" In a tone implying that she was losing her last friend on earth, her last chance of salvation.

I flung out my arms in despair. All my Latin instincts for the dramatic must have emerged in that gesture.

"My dear child, what else can I possibly do?"

There were tears in her eyes. "I don't know," she said. "I only know that you should not leave me."

I believe that I replied: "Natia, it is all for the best in the end." Something ridiculous and trite like that, facing those brimming, pleading eyes. She was resting her head against the back of the sofa; and in a tired movement, verging on despair, she dropped her cheek against my shoulder. I found myself stroking that dark, neat head, and I found my arm slipping about her. It all seemed so perfectly natural at the time. She needed protection. She needed sympathy. And while she sat there in my arms, sighing a little, I began to understand Paul's attitude toward her better than I had ever understood it before. Why she's only a child, I thought. A passive yet confiding child. This isn't at all in your line, Tony Jenesta. You love her, if you love her at all, for exactly what she is: a little girl waiting, like so many others, for the fantastic and the impossible. Waiting for some white knight to come along on his fine horse, and to carry her away to a turreted castle. Nursery stuff, as Americans would say.

It was at that moment that I heard the clang of the steel elevator doors down the corridor; and I heard a man whistling a faint and idiotic little tune—some faint echo of the past, of the war, which I vaguely recognized. But Natia did not hear these sounds. With her head on my shoulder, eyeing the ceiling dreamily, she was far too absorbed in her own reactions to life. "I don't want you to go away, ever," she was saying. "Because I feel that if—" I wanted suddenly to hurl her from my arms; but I had neither the power nor the will. And I remained pinned there on the sofa, motionless, imprisoned by a sudden and amazing idea. It was swifter than a bolt of lightning. One of those scribbled violet messages across the black sky of uncertainty. An instinct, if you like, more potent than reasoning; a moment, perhaps, of sheer genius. Here, it whispered to me, is the way out. Here is the solution—if only you have the courage to carry it through. And so I did not release her.

Paul flung open the door, and came striding into the salon.

"Natia, dear. Wasn't it amazing? I actually won the——"

I looked over her head at him, and my face conveyed nothing. No single human expression could have been adequate to that occasion. Natia jumped to her feet. As for Paul, he simply stood still. I can see him now, his hand gripping the fragile glass knob of the door, his face draining to a strange, nauseated whiteness. He had one of those sensitive complexions, quick to record any sharp change of emotion. For a moment or two he stared at us. And then, pulling himself together, he said in his very best, outwardly calm English way: "Tony. I—I don't quite understand this. . . ."

Natia did what I expected her to do. She was, after all, a foreigner—to whom realities were more important than form, than keeping what the English called a stiff upper lip. She gave Paul one dazed look and dashed into the adjoining room. He and I remained, facing each other. I had an almost

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uncontrollable desire to laugh, because it was all so absurdly dramatic, so far removed from the everyday sensations of life. I had to shake off a conviction that I was playing in some silly game—like charades. Paul picked up a book, lying on a table beside him; glanced at the title, and put it down again. Then he straightened the angle of an ash tray, frowning at it, sucking in his lips. Also he looked at the pile of letters awaiting him on his desk. It was all very British, very casual, and a superb exhibition of control. But I saw him brushing his hand, again and again, over his brow in that old and familiar movement which he always made under the stress of a great fatigue or a great emotion. And I thought: how well I know him, yet what strangers we are at this moment. Then, finally, he turned to me and said in a flat, weary voice: "Got anything to say?" He couldn't even look at me, but kept fumbling at those letters and frowning at them.

"It should be perfectly clear to you," I answered. "Do you think it wise to go into explanations?"

I knew that this would infuriate him. I knew that he detested callousness more than any other human manifestation. And I had to make him angry. I had to release him in some way from that stricken bewilderment.

He reacted instantly. He wheeled round, facing me, flushing a dark crimson; and his voice became thick, blurred, as if there was something caught in his throat. "Christ! You must be mad! Or is this beastly sort of business a frequent pastime of yours, that you're so casual? It seems I didn't know you very well." He began pacing up and down the room, clasping and unclasping his hands behind his back. "Of all the rotten, stinking performances! Mark you, I'm not going to blame Natia for it. I know her too well. She's a child. An easy prey for your filthy foreign experiments——"

This angered me in turn, and made things much easier for me.

"We'll leave nationality out of this, Paul——"

"Don't 'Paul' me, you swine."

"—We'll leave nationalities out of this, and we'll talk simple facts. You're to blame, and nobody else. And if you can't see it; why, then, God help you!"

"How long has this been going on?"

"Going on!" I cried. "Why, it hasn't even begun! You'd see that, if you had a grain of practical sense in your head, instead of all those bloody ideals. You're living in a world of flesh and blood, my dear man. We're not a collection of emasculated angels——"

"Look here!" he said. "Look here!" He stood beside me, livid and trembling. "I'm damned if I'll be lectured by you, and insulted into the bargain. You'd better clear out of here, before you compel me to kick you out."

Then he strode over to the door, and flung it open. I picked up my hat wearily. It was all so preposterous. So muddled. So pitifully in the tradition of such scenes. We had not spoken a word of sense between us. We hadn't touched upon the root of the thing. I said: "You make me feel as if I were in a dress suit, in one of your high-class, English drawing-room comedies."

"Very witty," he said. "Are you going, or are you not? Must I call the porter?"

"I am going," I told him. "But before I go, I'll tell you something. And I don't give a damn if it offends your sensibilities, your reticence, and all your sacred gentlemanly code. Your wife happens to be a lovely, strong, healthy young woman. Not an ailing ghost, as you seem to prefer to consider her. And lovely, strong young women like to be treated as such. And if they don't get that treatment at home, my poor, dear ass, they're going to seek it elsewhere. No matter how pure and innocent their hearts may be."

I walked past him. He was standing sentinel beside the door. Very straight and white and rigid. And as I brushed past him, I heard a single, short word. "Cad!" I believe that I laughed in his face. He always ran so true to form. . . .

When I had finished packing that evening I went out for a brief turn on the Croisette. The palms marging the seafront were motionless, like giant feather dusters against a moonlit panel of sky. And there were, undulating across the harbor waters, irregular streaks of cherry brandy and crème de menthe, the vibrating reflections from the bridge lights on a row of yachts riding at anchor.

I passed by the Majestic, and I saw that there was a light in each of the two Drury bedrooms at the corner of the third floor. I tried to imagine what was happening up there, now that I had succeeded in destroying the calm, even tenure of their lives. I knew so well what those other evenings had been like. Natia in something soft and shimmering, probably mauve in color, for she favored mauve, seated before her mirror, uncoiling her dark hair. Paul, pottering about his own room; placing his golf shoes outside the door to be polished; placing his tie on the little contraption of gilded wire which always hung beside his dressing-table. Seating himself at his desk, to make an entry in his notebook. *The clouds on the horizon beyond Antibes were like the pinnacled coast of some fabulous land. . . . Silver olives against a roof of orange tiles. . . .* Things like that. Or, perhaps, glancing in at Natia and saying, as one says to a little girl, solicitously, tenderly, with the eyes soft and kind: "Oh, my angel. It's so late for you to be up. You must go to sleep now. We must get some color in those cheeks." Kissing her brow, maybe, or even her mouth—but with the eyes still soft, still kind. So that when he had gone she continued to uncoil her hair listlessly, without pride or anticipation, because there was no one present to comment in wonder upon its exceeding lustre. . . .

That was how it had been. But even at the moment, glancing up toward those windows, something told me that I had changed all that. Because I remembered Paul's fury—the best thing I had ever witnessed, for in his anger he had at last seen through his clouds and looked upon the earth; and once having looked upon it, and all the good, ripe things it bore, he would find it hard to turn back to the clouds.

I walked back to my hotel. I would go on to Florence, I decided, the next morning. While I made my plans I thought: it would be easy to stop at Genoa on the way, to catch a glimpse of Carlotta. Only a glimpse, of course, and merely to see how she had fared during the intervening years. There might even be a grain of truth in Tito Guardi's story, in her defense. I didn't yet admit the truth of it—only the pleasant possibilities it contained, if it were true. . . .

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